

COM 498: INTERNSHIP IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Summer 1 & 2

May - July 2008

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PURPOSE

The purpose of an internship is to provide practical work experience in a field you have identified as of potential career interest. Under the supervision of industry professionals, you will blend your academic training with pragmatic application. An internship should enhance your education far beyond the notion of it “looking good on a resume’.” That is, your primary concern should be the acquisition and development of cognitive and technical skills as a result of the hours dedicated to your host agency.

As an intern, you represent UNCW, the Department of Communication Studies, and perhaps most importantly, yourself. Your performance as an intern may do more to bolster or tarnish the impression agency personnel have of our institution and program than any other interaction these individuals have with our university. To that end, it is your responsibility to remain a dedicated, responsible “employee” throughout your tenure as an intern.

You must also consider COM 498 an upper-level writing-intensive course. Exemplary professional writing is paramount to your success in this class, and certainly of key importance with regard to graduate school and career pursuits. Successful completion of your internship is possible only through top notch written work submitted to your agency and faculty internship director.

In turn, it is the agency’s obligation to provide you with a substantive, constructive experience, affording you insight into its organizational culture and activities. If, at any time, you feel the agency is not meeting its formal commitment as per its approved internship description, please notify me so I may intervene on your behalf. In addition, you should feel free to discuss with your agency supervisor(s), in a professional manner, your aspirations relative to the internship. For instance, if you would like to participate in or observe activities beyond those to which you have been granted access, it is your right to inform agency personnel of such desires, contingent on your requests being reasonable in terms of the organization’s resources and operating procedures.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Purchase a writing style guide of your choice. Examples are:

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White

A Pocket Style Manual, by Diana Hacker

The Writer's Pocket Handbook, by Rosa Eschholz

easyWriter, by Andrea A. Lunsford

EVALUATION

UNCW internships are evaluated on a PASS/FAIL basis. This change resulted from the fact that some degree programs require a substantial number of internship credit hours, and it was felt that these hours were impacting student GPA's in an inequitable fashion versus on-campus course work. In addition, when completing confidential student evaluations, internship agency supervisors may hold varying standards with regard to student performance. It is essential to understand that, although you will not receive a letter grade for your internship enrollment, you must strive for "A" work. "Average" work, for example, work that may earn a "C" in a conventional class, is simply NOT an option for your internship. As a representative of this university and the Department of Communication Studies, the stakes are much higher than your performance in a single, traditional course. As such, if your work is sub-par throughout the term you may FAIL your internship or it may be terminated prior to the semester's conclusion.

Realize that these conditions also apply to the quality of your writing, class attendance, and participation.

EVALUATED ELEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Running Time Log - Each day or session spent at the internship site should be logged to account for hours dedicated to the agency. To keep an accurate account of such hours, record for each session the **date, start time, end time, hours worked, running total, and activities** as follows:

DATE	START TIME	END TIME	HOURS WORKED	RUNNING TOTAL	ACTIVITIES
5-19-08	9:00 am	1:00 pm	4	4	
5-19-08	2:00 pm	4:00 pm	2	6	
5-20-08	1:00 pm	7:30 pm	6.5	12.5	
5-21-08	8:00 am	11:15 am	3.25	15.75	

Running Time Log **must** be created using MicroSoft Excel. An Excel spreadsheet is available on my website. It will calculate your running total for you. If you choose to create your own spreadsheet that is fine. If you are using Excel 2007 you will need to *save as* a format compatible with Excel 2003.

You must complete a minimum of **126 hours** at the agency to earn **three (3) hours** of academic credit and **252 hours** to earn **six (6) hours** of academic credit.

Exit Interview – At the end of your internship you will experience an exit interview with your agency supervisor(s). This is described in more detail in the Exit Interview handout available on my website. I will provide your supervisor with this information at the end of the semester.

Reflection/Progress Reports - Throughout the semester, you will submit internship progress reports to summarize your experiences to-date (particularly since the last progress report was completed). **Your reports must be two to three (2-3) double-spaced typed pages with standard one inch margins. Use either Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font for your reports. You will not pass the assignment unless you meet the page requirements.** Outside sources are not required but are certainly welcomed and, if utilized, must be documented using APA style, complete with a “references” page. **Submit reports via email attachment in MSWord by noon on due date.** WordPerfect is not acceptable. If you do not have Word then you will need to convert your WordPerfect document to rich text format. If you are using Word 2007 you will need to *save as* a format compatible with Word 2003.

Progress reports will be evaluated for content, style, and technical excellence. Consider every piece of writing completed for your internship (whether submitted to me or agency personnel) an example of *your absolute best work*. Such material should meet the highest standards of precision, for instance with respect to mechanics (spelling, grammar, subject/verb agreement, absence of intensifiers slang and pedestrian terminology such as “got,” “a lot,” “pretty good,” and “really”, and correct usage, for instance “their” as a possessive versus “there.”) **Proof reading your work multiple times, including aloud, is essential.** I encourage you to work with a proof reading partner. Utilize software features such as spell check, grammar check, and the FIND feature to discover and repair errors or deficiencies. Significant grading deductions will result from the presence of technical errors.

Reflection/Progress Report topics are as follows:

Report #1: Address the following prompts in an essay meeting the stipulated guidelines. Begin each response with the corresponding question number, i.e., 1., 2., and 3. That is, literally place numbers in your essay as you begin each response. **Do not include the question itself, just each number.** Paragraph topic sentences are **not** sufficient, and failure to include question numbers will result in a deduction to the assignment grade. Begin new paragraphs as appropriate to signal shifts in main topics or sub-topics.

1. Respond to my comments in your course cover letter and syllabus. What are your independent opinions of the requirements for the internship, both in terms of your obligations to the agency as well as academic assignments to be submitted to me?
2. Thus far, what opportunities do you find most exciting with regard to your potential work with the agency?
3. Prior to this report, schedule a formal meeting with your agency supervisor(s)/mentor(s) to discuss your progress to-date, satisfaction level, and goals for the remainder of your internship. Include a summary of that meeting in this report (include date and time).

Two Paragraph UPDATE (only for interns enrolled in SU I or SU II)

In a few paragraphs, provide a status report.

1. How have things changed since Reflection/Progress Reports #1?

2. What initiatives have you taken to maximize your experience, vary your assigned tasks, or address the problems?

Report #2: (only for interns enrolled in BOTH Summer sessions or who are spreading their 126 hour obligation across BOTH Summer sessions as previously arranged with me.)

Address the following prompts in an essay meeting the stipulated guidelines. Begin each response with the corresponding question number, i.e., 1., 2., and 3. That is, literally place numbers in your essay as you begin each response. **Do not include the question itself, just each number.** Paragraph topic sentences are **not** sufficient, and failure to include question numbers will result in a deduction to the assignment grade. Begin new paragraphs as appropriate to signal shifts in main topics or sub-topics.

1. How has your internship progressed thus far?
2. What activities and experiences have proved *most* educational and/or exhilarating?
3. What initiatives have you taken to maximize your experience, vary your assigned tasks, or address the problems?
4. Describe and provide at least one example of a communication theory, concept, or strategy studied in your academic course work that you have observed at this point in your internship. In your answer thoroughly define the concept in your own words, apply to a situation at your agency, and include the class name and the name of your instructor in this answer.
5. Prior to this report, schedule a formal meeting with your agency supervisor(s)/mentor(s) to discuss your progress to-date, satisfaction level, and goals for the remainder of your internship. Include a summary of that meeting in this report (include date and time).

Final Paper. Based on your cumulative internship experience, respond to the seven questions listed below. Typical of an academic research paper, all outside sources should be listed on a “references” page, with quoted and paraphrased information documented with endnotes. APA style must be employed.

Your paper should be **four to five (4-5) pages and double-spaced with standard one-inch margins.** **You will not pass the assignment unless you meet the page requirements. Use either Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font for your reports. Please include the seven assignment question numbers.** That is, literally place numbers in your essay as you begin each response. **Do not include the question itself, just each number.** Paragraph topic sentences are **not** sufficient, and failure to include question numbers will result in a deduction to the assignment grade. Begin new paragraphs as appropriate to signal shifts in main topics or sub-topics.

The final paper **must** include **at least two outside sources**, e.g. text book, journal article, trade publication, media broadcast, etc. Keep in mind that this paper is a confidential conversation between the two of us, so feel free to openly express your opinions. **The final paper will be submitted via e-mail attachment in MSWord by noon on due date.** WordPerfect is not acceptable. If you do not have Word then you will need to convert your WordPerfect document to rich text format. If you are using Word 2007 you will need to *save as* a format compatible with Word 2003.

1. What intellectual aptitudes have been enhanced because of your internship?
2. What technical skills have improved as a result of your time with the agency? Describe and provide at least one example (e.g., computer application, video editing process, Internet research, PowerPoint presentation) studied in your academic course work that you observed or utilized while serving as an intern.
3. Describe and provide at least one example of a communication theory, concept, or strategy studied in your academic course work that you observed while serving as an intern. In your answer define the concept in your own words, apply to a specific situation at your agency, and include the class name and the name of your instructor in this answer. This may not be the theory, concept or strategy discussed in Report #2 (if you completed report #2).
4. If presented with the opportunity, what advice or assistance would you offer the agency to improve its basic operations with respect to the product or services it provides?
5. If presented with the opportunity, what advice or assistance would you offer the agency to improve its culture (including the interpersonal dynamics between employees as well as between employees and customers/clients)?
6. In general, how do you evaluate your “official” supervisor with regard to his/her obligations in overseeing your internship and serving as a mentor?
7. During your internship what did you learn about yourself that was reinforced in the exit interview? What action/behavior/skill did your supervisor comment on that made you stop, think and review your actions while at the agency and what did you learn from this self-assessment?

Due Dates

Please review the chart below carefully. Submit all written work via e-mail in MSWord (or Excel for spreadsheet) by noon. The time log and report are two separate items, in other words do not place your time log at the end of your paper. (Works and WordPerfect are not acceptable.)

Assignment	Summer 1 Interns	Summer 2 Interns	Summer 1 & 2 Interns
Reflection/Progress Report # 1 and Running Time Log	Due Thursday, May 29	Due Tuesday, July 8	Due Thursday, June 12
Two Paragraph Update	Due Thursday, June 5	Due, Tuesday, July 15	N/A

Reflection/Progress Report 2 and Running Time Log	N/A	N/A	Due Thursday, July 3
Final Paper & Running Time Log	Due Tuesday, June 17	Due Friday, July 25	Due Friday, July 25

Attendance. Your attendance and participation on site with your host agency is a vital portion of your overall PASS/FAIL semester evaluation. If you must miss a work session at your sponsoring organization, contact an agency supervisor ASAP. During the summer you and I will converse by phone and/or e-mail. Consistent contact (weekly) with me is an important aspect of the internship experience. For those who may be engaged in out-of-town internships, phone, fax, and e-mail contact is essential.

Agency Supervisor's Evaluation. A confidential set of numerical ratings and narrative evaluations will be completed by your agency supervisor. Since your supervisor will spend considerably more time with you during the semester than will I, his/her evaluation of your work will *significantly* impact your final grade.

PORTFOLIO MATERIALS

These items are generated at the organization either alone or as part of a group, e.g. newsletters, press releases, brochures, art work, video clips, audio PSA's, etc. Do not submit these items to me. I am simply urging you to keep these materials for later inclusion in your COM 490 *Discipline Capstone* portfolio and/or your portfolio following graduation when interviewing for professional and/or graduate school positions. Keep a record of the nature of the work contributed to each piece, e.g. *wrote script, edited article, created original artwork, published finished document in desktop PC environment, etc.*, and indicate those details when you eventually place these artifacts in your portfolio. You should request permission to include these items in your portfolio before the end of your internship.

CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY

Please know that all of our correspondence (whether in-person, phone, e-mail, Reflection/Progress Reports, or your Final Paper) is strictly confidential. I also place trust in you that my comments regarding an agency or supervisor will also be kept confidential.

Report on the positive and negative aspects of your experience and co-workers. When you levy criticism, be certain it is specific and constructive. As often as possible, connect your internship tasks and encounters to those from previous and current course work, extracurricular activities, full- or part-time jobs, social groups, and other life experiences.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

UNCW practices a zero-tolerance policy for violence and harassment of any kind. For emergencies contact UNCW CARE at 962-2273, Campus Police at 962-3184, or Wilmington Police at 911. For University or community resources visit <http://uncw.edu/wrc/crisis.htm>.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

In choosing UNCW, you have become part of our community of scholars. We recognize that the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. It also requires a commitment to make time available to do that hard work. The University expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours.

The **UNCW ACADEMIC HONOR CODE** will be observed and enforced in this class. For specific information, see the 2007-2008 Student Handbook and Code of Student Life.

CONCERNING EXCELLENCE

An internship is a competitively selected academic experience, and one that supersedes the required course work for the B.A. degree in communication studies. As previously noted, your performance is a significant reflection on the quality and integrity of our program and institution. I fully expect that all interns will strive for "A" work in seeking a final evaluation of PASS. That is, those seeking to complete an internship must be eager to display a level of excellence for the benefit of all parties involved.

A designation of PASS will only result from high-quality work in **all** aspects of the internship. To that end, I urge you to carefully review the requirements for each internship assignment and responsibility, and to request clarification as needed. If you do not submit the CBT certificate when required you will fail the course. Simply spending the requisite hours on-site with your agency will **not** amount to a grade of PASS for COM 498 *Internship in Communication Studies*.