

Rutgers University, School of Management and Labor Relations
Syllabus: Internship in Labor Studies, 37:575:496 and 37:575:497

COURSE ACCESS: <https://ecollege.rutgers.edu>

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Course Overview:

This course is both an online class and an internship and is designed to supplement traditional classroom-based learning with experiential learning. The internship provides students with the opportunity to practically apply knowledge gained in their course of study in labor and workplace issues.

Internships can be with a variety of host organizations, including labor unions, community organizations, government agencies and private industry. A minimum of 120 hours of substantive work in the placement setting is required. Whether you have arranged your internship yourself, or whether you have been assisted in arranging one by the instructor or other faculty member, you should let the instructor know immediately if there is a problem with the internship so that she can either intervene appropriately or see if you can be transferred to a different situation.

Students should be both supported and challenged and encouraged to take initiative and develop life-long learning skills. Each intern works under a site supervisor at the host organization. The role of the site supervisor is to oversee the student experience and provide structure and mentorship throughout the internship. The site supervisor will complete a performance evaluation at the conclusion of the internship. Students will discuss their experiences through weekly written journals and online threaded discussions.

Learning Outcomes:

Through an internship, students will have the opportunity to gain a variety of experience and education by:

- Gaining practical work experience under professional supervision and guidance;
- Applying theories and principles learned in academic coursework to specific situations with the internship experience;
- Observing and analyzing professional behavior through observing the daily functioning of the work place and reflecting on how people within the organization carry out its mission.

Evaluation and Grading:

Although an internship is intended to provide you with practical work experience, it is also an academic course, during which you are expected to submit assignments regarding your work. These assignments are designed to maximize the internship experience and integrate your education with real world job opportunities. All interns, therefore, are required to meet with the supervising faculty member at the beginning of the internship to establish goals. The final grade will be based upon the timely submission of the following items:

Introductory Paper: Students are to prepare a two page document that summarizes the proposed learning arrangement. The document would normally include, among other things:

- A description of the intern's duties and responsibilities, and any special training that is offered by the internship provider
- What you intend to learn through the internship in terms of professional experience (i.e., the learning objectives)

Weekly Journal: Journal entries should include **substantive information** (meaning don't give me two sentences and think you're done) regarding observations made during your daily work experiences. The journal should summarize how your time was spent, what you learned, what went right, what could have gone better, and so forth. Other topics to consider: work environment, issues of professionalism, examples of effective teamwork, communication methods employed, challenges you have encountered, etc. The journal should be updated at the end of each week and submitted online at the assigned dates listed in the course schedule. **You will be required to submit a total of eleven (11) journals.**

Final Reflection Paper: The final report is an in-depth assessment and reflection of the internship. The paper should be based on the journal and be linked to the internship's learning objectives. It is especially important to illustrate linkages between the internship experience and your academic coursework. It should include the following:

- **Employer/Organization:** Name, type of business/organization (purpose); location; internship supervisor; mission of organization (discuss whether you feel it is an accurate reflection of the organization); organizational hierarchy/structure, personnel policies/code of conduct - written or unwritten but understood (discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these); communication methods and effectiveness, etc.
- **Internship Information:** Title of your position (if any); goals of the internship with examples of how these goals were achieved; specific tasks and/or assignments you were given, etc.

- **Evaluation of Experience:** Describe your accomplishments in the internship and how you feel your accomplishments impacted or impacts the organization, if at all; discuss the career implications of your internship experience, detailing the connection between your formal education in your major and the internship; discuss what professional, academic, and personal impact the internship had on you, explaining what you learned about yourself and any insights gained; include how you did on meeting the learning outcomes established at the beginning of the internship; discuss how the internship may or may not have influenced your career goals, how it did or did not meet your expectations, and whether you would recommend your internship sit to future students.

Threaded Discussion Forums

Of great importance in an online learning environment is the opportunity for students to discuss their internship experiences with each other. Students are required to communicate their insights and thoughts while learning from one another in the process.

It is expected that students will engage in **four** discussion forums throughout the semester. For each discussion forum you will be posting answers to situations or questions posed and then comment on other student's postings. Discussions will be open for two weeks, ending at midnight on Sundays. You are expected to participate at least four (4) times **throughout** the open discussion period with your reactions to questions AND with reactions to your peers' postings.

Forums are asynchronous. This means that within a given time frame of two weeks - students can respond to the forum questions at anytime during the day or night. Forum close dates are posted in the course schedule. You are expected to post responses in each of the forums a **minimum of four times** during the two-week period. A missed forum discussion cannot be "made up."

Grading will be as follows: all journal entries and threaded discussions will count for 1/3rd of your overall grade and your final reflection paper will count for 2/3^{rds} of your final grade.

Course Schedule:

NOTE: Due to students finalizing placements, this course work will not start until two weeks into the beginning of the semester.

September 8th – 25th : Read syllabus; read college instructions, and FAQ's.

INTRODUCTORY PAPER DUE: September 26th by midnight.

JOURNAL DUE DATES:

September 26th: Journal entry #1 due by midnight

October 3rd: Journal entry #2 due by midnight.

October 10th: Journal entry #3 due by midnight.

October 17th: Journal entry #4 due by midnight

October 24th: Journal entry #5 due by midnight.

October 31st: Journal entry #6 due by midnight

November 7th: Journal entry #7 due by midnight.

November 14th: Journal entry #8 due by midnight.

November 21st: Journal entry #9 due by midnight.

November 28th: Journal entry #10 due by midnight.

December 5th: Journal entry #11 due by midnight.

FORUM DISCUSSION DATES:

First forum will open on **Monday, September 26th and close on Sunday, October 9th**. I expect discussion to continue throughout this time period. DO NOT wait until the last minute to post responses.

Second forum will open on **Monday, October 17th and close on Sunday, October 30th**. I expect discussion to continue throughout this time period. DO NOT wait until the last minute to post responses.

Third forum will open on **Monday, November 7th and close on Sunday, November 20th**. I expect discussion to continue throughout this time period. DO NOT wait until the last minute to post responses.

Fourth forum will open on **Monday, November 28th and close on Sunday, December 11th**. I expect discussion to continue throughout this time period. DO NOT wait until the last minute to post responses.

FINAL PAPER DUE: Friday, December 16th by midnight. Paper should be roughly be 12 – 14 pages.

Tech FAQs

Students may have questions about content or technical aspects of the course. **It is the responsibility of the student to read Tech FAQs at the beginning of the semester.** The professor cannot assist students with a technical problem – but Rutgers Online helpdesk can and will 24/7.

FORUM #1

I expect each of you to post your responses and react to your peer's responses over the entire two-week period. You should post a minimum of four (4) times during each of these forums.

Each of you are participating in an internship, but these placements are all unique and, thus, your experiences, will vary greatly. Sharing experiences with your peers is a valuable way to learn and I look forward to reading your responses.

For this first forum, I'd like you to:

- Introduce yourself (who you are, major, year, anything interesting you'd like to share etc.)
- Discuss your internship placement (type of business or organization, where is it located, mission of organization, your title, etc.)
- Discuss the learning objectives that have been developed for your position

Answer:

- "Why did you take this particular internship?"
- "What knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience"
- "How does this internship relate to your future career plans?"

RESPONSES TO YOUR PEERS:

After reading the posts of your peers, think about how your learning objectives and workplaces are similar or different from yours and post your observations. Feel free to ask them questions about their postings in order to create a dialogue.

Make sure to check back to see what questions I or other students ask you about your placement.

FORUM #2:

For this forum, please interview some of your colleagues within the

workplace. Ask them about their work history - where they went to school, what was their area of study, why they chose the career they did, how they got to their present position, etc. Basically, how did they build their careers?

- Share your observations of these interviews in the forum and provide what you found most interesting or surprising about what you learned.
- Did hearing about your co-workers' career path give you any insight into your future employment perspectives or path?
- Did you learn anything that you will now apply to or adjust for in your own career path?
- What themes do you see emerging from the different work histories discussed here?

SPECIFIC FOCUS: (When responding to this theme, please type "Diversity" before your comments so the path of discussion flows)

(Diversity): What is the organizational hierarchy/structure of the organization? What are your observations related to racial and gender inclusion/exclusion within the workplace?

Do you notice any difference between the career/life stories of the men and women you talk to in the organization, or if this is a same-gendered workplace, why do you think that is?

FORUM #3:

The following are areas of discussion regarding your internship's workplace conditions. When responding to a question, please type in the word in parenthesis before you enter a comment in order to have a threaded discussion on the same topic.

Questions to Consider:

(Law): Is there a handbook or union contract covering employees? If yes, does it contain a grievance procedure? If no, how are conflicts resolved? Do you see any observations of violations of any employment laws, such as Fair Labor Standards Act, Family Leave Act, OSHA, EEOC, etc.?

(H&S): Are there any observable health and safety issues for employees? If yes, what are they? Have the employees tried in any way to resolve them? If so, how? If not, why? Is there any policy that discusses working conditions, as they relate to health and safety? If yes, is the policy practiced? If no, what policy do you think should be in place?

(Other): Is there anything else that you've observed about the working conditions at your workplace that you'd like to share?

RESPONDING TO YOUR PEERS:

When commenting on the posts of your peers, make observations about differences and similarities between their workplace and yours on these issues. Are there any themes emerging from the working conditions of you and your peers? Any surprises?

FORUM #4:

Making the connections between learned knowledge and practical experience is incredibly valuable, both to you as students, and to us as faculty.

Throughout these forums, you've been able to make observations on your internship experience in a number of areas that have been related to the coursework of your formal education within SMLR, such as employment law, occupational safety and health and diversity in the workplace.

- What other observations have you made at your workplace that you can relate to material learned in the classes you have taken? (You can also expand on the topics already covered as they related to coursework you've completed.)
- Are there things that you have learned that you believe should be included in the curriculum within the SMLR?

RESPONDING TO PEERS:

Make an effort to react to the comments made by your peers in relationship to coursework taken. Share what classes you've taken and which ones have helped you the most in your workplace and why. React to similarities and differences experienced in classes and in the internship experience as it relates to coursework.