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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is both an online class and an internship and is designed to supplement traditional classroom-based learning with experiential learning. Internships and professional development are important components of your progress towards becoming active and knowledgeable contributors to the workforce and society. Increased knowledge and greater skills that come with internships and field work provide you with the tools to perform more effectively in your future positions. Moreover, professional development opportunities create networking opportunities for you and potential employers.

Internships provide students with practical work experience related to the profession they are pursuing and a taste of the working world. Additionally, internships are valuable for the hard skills interns gain such as project management, business communication and writing, strategic planning, proficiency with software applications, and other technical skills as well as the soft skills they gain.

A minimum of 120 hours of substantive work in the placement setting is required. 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. Each intern also has a faculty advisor who provides academic structure and mentorship throughout the internship. If there is any problem with your internship, please inform your faculty advisor and me so that we can either intervene appropriately or see if you can be transferred to a different internship site.

COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the internship, students will be expected to achieve the following:

1. Gain practical professional experience under supervision and guidance.
2. Apply theories and principles learned in the classroom to practice.
3. Observe and analyze professional behavior through the daily functioning of the internship site and reflect on how people within an organization carry out its mission.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND COURSE PROTOCOL

This course is based on both the practical work experienced gained in the internship as well as the academic analysis of that experience. During the course you are expected to submit assignments regarding your internship experience that are intended to have you reflect on the experience itself as well as your professional development, thereby integrating your education with your practical experience. You are, therefore, expected to meet with your faculty advisor at the prior to and regularly during your internship as well as completing written assignments.

- **Introductory Paper (10%)**

Prepare a two-page paper that summarizes the internship opportunity. The document should include:

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

The introductory paper is due on Sunday, June 10.

- **Cultural Audit (10%)**

Prepare a cultural audit approximately halfway through your internship (between the sixth and seventh journal entries). According to Edgar Schein (1992), culture is the most difficult organizational attribute to change, outlasting organizational products, services, founders and leadership and all other physical attributes of the organization. Schein is credited with coining the term “corporate culture.” His organizational model illuminates culture from the standpoint of the observer, described by three cognitive levels of organizational culture: assumptions, values, and interpretative frameworks. Patrick Love added a fourth level, cultural artifacts. Complete a simple cultural audit of your internship site using the provided chart.

The cultural audit is due between the sixth and seventh journal entries.

- **Journal Entries (15%)**

Prepare substantive journal entries (1.5-2 pages) regarding your observations and learning experiences during your internship. You have the option of completing a weekly entry for twelve weeks or one entry for every ten (10) hours worked for a total of twelve journal entries. Journal entries can include an analysis of the following:

- What you learned (about the job, the company, your interests, etc.)
- What went well and not so well
- What surprised you
- The work environment
- How you are applying classroom theory to practice
- Challenges you have encountered

- **Online discussion forums (15%)**

As part of this supplemental online learning environment, you have the opportunity to discuss your internship experiences with the other students in the section. You will communicate your insights and thoughts while learning from one another in the process.

You will engage in four online discussion forums. For each discussion forum you will post answers to situations or questions posed and then comment on each other’s postings. Discussions will be open for two weeks, ending at midnight on Sundays. You must post at least four times for each discussion thread with your responses to the posed questions and with reactions to your peers’ postings. A missed forum discussion cannot be made up after the thread is closed.

- Forum 1: Introductions – 5/29 to 6/10
- Forum 2: Work History – 6/17 to 7/1
- Forum 3: Working Conditions – 7/8 to 7/22
- Forum 4: Applying Theory to Practice – 7/29 to 8/12

- **Final Reflection Paper (50%)**

Prepare a 12-15 page paper in which you assess and reflect on your internship. This assignment will be graded by your faculty advisor. The paper should reflect what you wrote in your journal entries, discussion forums, and cultural audit and also be linked to the internship's learning objectives. Additionally, you should demonstrate the link between the internship experience and your academic coursework. As your faculty advisor may not have read your course assignments, redundancy with those assignments is fine. The paper should include the following components (feel free to add other content as well):

- Internship site information including the name, type of business/organization (purpose); location; internship supervisor; mission of the internship site; organizational hierarchy/structure, personnel policies/code of conduct (written or unwritten but understood); communication methods and effectiveness; culture, etc.
- Description of responsibilities: 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 the internship experience: Describe your accomplishments in the internship; your impact on the internship site; the benefits (or detriments) of the internship experience; the career implications of your internship; the professional, academic, and personal impact the internship had on you, explaining what you learned about yourself and any insights gained;
- Explain 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 site to future students.