

**Rutgers University, School of Management and Labor Relations**  
**Syllabus: Internship in Labor Studies, 37:575:496:90 and 37:575:497:90**

**COURSE ACCESS: [sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)**

**Spring 2015**

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**Note:** Your first assignment is to meet with me by phone or in person to provide an update on plans for your internship. Depending on your internship start date and schedule, we will determine whether we need to create an individualized deadlines for the assignments.

**Course Overview:**

This online course is designed to combine academic work with experiential learning in the internship placement. Internships can be arranged 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. Students discuss and analyze their experiences through weekly written journals, online threaded discussions, and papers.

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. Students should be both supported and challenged to take initiative and develop both professional and life-long learning skills. The site supervisor will complete a performance evaluation at the conclusion of the internship. If there is a problem with the internship, inform me immediately, so I can intervene appropriately or try to make arrangements for a different internship setting.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Through the internship and the online learning assignments, students should have the opportunity to:

- Observe, analyze and think critically about professional behavior, and conditions, culture and systems within their work organizations and compare their experiences to their peers
- Apply theories and principles related to the field of Labor Studies and Employment Relations in the internship setting
- Gain practical work experience and develop skills relevant to their career goals under professional supervision and guidance

**Online Course Protocol**

To integrate your academic and professional experience, you will complete brief readings and a number of written assignments relevant to analyzing your internship experience. *You should meet with or contact me regularly during your internship to provide updates. I will also email/call you during the semester if I have concerns or questions.* The academic portion of this course is run on Sakai. Please do not use Sakai's [Mailtool] function or send me a private message through the [Discussion and Private Messages] tab. Assignments are posted and must be submitted in the Assignments tab except for online forum assignments.

## **Grading**

Your overall grade is based on the following:

- Five journal entries and three online discussion forums: (5 pts each) – 40%
- Three papers: Introductory memo 5%, Cultural audit: 15%; Final reflection paper: 30% (total of 50%)
- Supervisor evaluation: 10% (Your internship supervisor will provide feedback on your work at mid-term and at the end of the semester.)

Grades: Graded papers with comments will be posted on the assignment page. Writing is a critical skill in a professional environment and an important part of this course. Although content is most important, clear and grammatical expression of thoughts and ideas, good sentence and paragraph structure, and correct spelling constitute 10–20 percent of your assignment grades. A paper with excellent content will not receive an “A” if it is poorly written.

Expectations and requirements: Document versions of papers and journals should be provided as an attachment on the assignment page. Please include your name, the date and the assignment at the top of the page. Read and edit your work before you post the assignment—no one writes great first drafts! Journals and papers should follow standard rules of format: 12-pt Times New Roman or Calibri font, 1” margins, double-spaced. References should use standard a standard format: <http://citesource.trincoll.edu/apsa/apsa.html>

Due Dates/Late submissions: All assignments are posted by week and can be handed in for full credit Monday – Friday the week they are due. Assignments handed in seven days after the Monday they are posted lose 10% credit. After two weeks, assignments will not be accepted unless you have contacted me ahead of time and we have agreed on a later due date.

Specific deadlines are provided for online forum discussions.

## **Overview of Assignments and Instructions**

### **Journal Entries**

Prepare five substantive journal entries based on your observations and experiences. Journals are expected to be one and a half to two pages in length. To spur your analysis and provide fodder for critical thinking, the journals will require you to respond to specific questions noted in the syllabus and/or perspectives raised in short reading assignments. See assignment schedule on pages 5 – 7.

Journals are intended to be reflective. Your entries should be no more than 25% description of your internship activities. The remaining 75% of each entry should focus on your observations, reflections and analysis of your experience and in the context of questions about the reading and your analysis of the professional and organizational context of your host organization.

The kinds of questions I expect you to reflect on in this class include:

1. What are you learning about the job, the company, and your own values and goals?
2. How does your internship differ from what you had expected? What is going and well and not so well?
4. Based on insights and key concepts gained in your previous coursework and assigned readings, how would you characterize the work environment and culture of your organization?
5. How do co-workers relate? How do supervisors and/or managers and leaders support and motivate (or fail to support/motivate) staff?
5. Are you finding the internship valuable in shaping your professional development and/or career path?

## Online discussion forums

Forums are intended to foster interaction and collaboration for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding and mastery of the course content. You may already be familiar with forums. If you have joined an online conversation in a social network, such as Facebook, or made comments or replies on a web site - you have participated in a forum. Forums in this class are different from those examples because the format is more structured than a forum open to anyone on the Internet.

Three online discussion forums for this class will offer the opportunity to discuss and compare your internship experiences and opinions about the readings with other students in the course. For each discussion forum you will post answers to situations or questions posed and then comment at least twice on a classmate's postings. *Please read your classmates post—the instructors' view of Sakai indicates the percentage of posts that you have taken the time to read.* You must post at least three times for each discussion thread with your responses to the posed questions and with reactions to your peers' postings. *In discussing individuals in your workplace, please respect their privacy by referring to them by initials or their roles in the organization.*

### How are the forums graded?

Your forum contribution is evaluated on comment quality, participation, and how well you express your ideas and thoughts. The matrix below was developed by faculty in this department and will be used as a guide when grading forum submissions. You won't actually receive this matrix with your grade, but I have included it here to give you a clearer idea of how the grading process works.

COMMENT QUALITY - 25 points	PARTICIPATION - 15	EXPRESSION - 10
<p><b>12 points</b> Exhibits critical thinking and an overall understanding of the topic.</p> <p><b>10 points</b> Relevant to the topic the forum addresses.</p> <p><b>3 points</b> Constructed so that citations of original work are available.</p>	<p><b>10 points</b> Provides a minimum of 3 comments per topic or question – the first must be an original post* in response to the assignment.</p> <p><b>3 points</b> Fosters learning community development through two replies that acknowledge and then build on the thoughts of others.</p> <p><b>2 points</b> At least 1 comment offers an appropriate question or point for the learning community to co</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Comments are well communicated. It is easy for peers to understand points being made.</p> <p><b>2 points</b> Comments are presented using appropriate grammar, sentence structure and spelling.</p> <p><b>3 points</b> Expression of ideas and thoughts is outstanding.</p> <p><b>3 points</b> Comments are appropriate for an academic</p>

## Papers

### Introductory Memo

Write a two page (approx. 500 word) memo that summarizes your background and the internship opportunity. Memos follow a specific format that is often used in professional settings. If you are not familiar with memo format, there are many online resources including examples provided at the following link: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/590/1/>.

Your memo should include the following information:

- Introduce yourself. Include a discussion of experiences, for example work and volunteer experiences, that have shaped your professional goals, the kind of work you hope to do and your plans following graduation.

- Describe your internship duties and responsibilities, and any special training that is offered by the internship site.
- Explain your personal objectives for this internship.
- Based on your contact with your internship organization—are there any challenges that you anticipate? If yes, share your thoughts on how you will overcome those challenges.

### Cultural Analysis of your Work Organization

According to Edgar Schein in his 1992 book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 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.” Complete a four page cultural analysis of your internship organization based on the instructions for the analysis posted in the [resources] tab.

### Final Paper

Prepare a 10 – 12 page paper in which you assess and reflect on your internship. The paper should build on the reflections and analysis you have shared over the course of the semester through your papers, journals and the online forum. The paper should include the following components (feel free to add other content as well):

- Provide internship site information including the name, type of business/organization (purpose); location; internship supervisor; and mission of the internship site.
- Summarize your responsibilities including the 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.
- Describe and reflect on your accomplishments in the internship related to your personal, professional and/or academic goals and any impact on the internship site; how the internship did or did not meet your expectations; discuss how the internship may or may not have influenced your career goals and whether you would recommend your internship site to future students.
- Describe and analyze the organizational hierarchy/structure, personnel policies/code of conduct (written or unwritten but understood); communication methods and effectiveness; culture, etc.) in the context of the concepts and frameworks about organizational culture, working conditions, and labor process included in readings for this class and in your previous coursework.
- Relate your experience to current debates about college internships and share your recommendations about how LSER could improve the internship experience.

This paper will build on your previous journals and papers. Rules of academic integrity dictate that when you are using or referring to your previous work, you must cite it. In other words, include in-text citations indicating from where you are pulling your content. If you draw on readings for this class or outside sources, also use in-text citations (Author, Date) and include complete citations in a short reference list. For instructions on citations format, see <http://citesource.trincoll.edu/apsa/apsa.html>

### **ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

The assignment schedule below creates a weekly schedule for readings and assignments that allows the class to think about their evolving understanding of their internship organization through journals and papers and share their observations with peers through a series of online forums. As this is an online course, you will not receive regular face-to-face reminders about submission deadlines, therefore it is your responsibility to check for and abide by posted deadlines. If you are unable to meaningfully complete assignments based on the start date of your internship—e.g. your internship starts late in the semester-I will work with you at the beginning of the semester to customize assignment dates based on the start and end date for your internship.

**Note – Readings may be added or changed, so please check the assignment tab or the most recent copy of your syllabus on Sakai.**

**Week of Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>: Check-in regarding scheduling of assignments and internship plans**

Review syllabus with special attention to schedule, readings and assignments.

- 1) Since this is an online course, I'd like to start by setting up a time to discuss and understand your internship and see if any we need to individualize any of the due dates based on your internship start or completion date. Email me to set up a "check in" conversation by phone or in person between Sept. 8 and Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Week of Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> – Journal Entry #1 - Values that Shape Decisions about Work**

See the introduction to The Thought of Work by John Budd (2011) posted on Sakai in the [resources] tab, and carefully review Budd's descriptions of the values that shape our choice of what we do. Then respond to the following questions:

- Based on Budd's descriptions of how people think about what work means in their lives, describe at least two goals that are very important to you when you think about the role of work in your own life and at least one goal that you view as relatively unimportant.
- If you have started your internship, explain how your internship relates to these goals?

Pay particular attention to the summary chart on the first page. Work means many things to each of us – and Budd describes various frameworks for understanding how people have thought—and continue to think about the role of work in their lives. *For full credit, upload journal entry to Sakai by Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>.*

**Week of Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> – Introductory Memo – Paper 1**

Submit introductory *memo* based on instructions on page 3. *For full credit, upload paper to Sakai by Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>.*

**Week of Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> – Journal Entry #2** - *Briefly* update your initial experiences with your host organization and then respond to the following question:

- How does your internship relate to key concepts or issues that attracted you to Labor Studies? Give three specific examples explaining both the specific concept and how your worksite or your internship responsibilities relate to these concepts. *Please describe specific issues or concepts—simply mentioning "labor relations" or "human resources" and discussing your experiences within this context is inadequate.*

*For full credit, upload journal entry to Sakai by Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

**Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> Online Forum #1** (Comparing internship experiences and goals)

Drawing on your introductory paper to introduce yourself to the class:

- 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.)
- Summarize the learning objectives that have been developed for your position
- In addition, respond to the following questions:
  - "Why did you choose 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, contrast and compare your goals and learning

objectives to those of at least two other students. Ask these students direct questions in order to create a dialogue. Make sure to check back to see what questions that I or other students ask you about your placement. Use your third post to draw together your observations about the class as a whole—what do you have in common? What differences do you see in the way people approach their internships.

*For full credit, first post due Oct. 14th; second post due Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>; third post Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Week of October 12th – Journal Entry #3 MAYBE BETTER FOR LATER IN THE SEMESTER??**

Read the brief article on “Diversity in Today’s Work Force” in the [resources] tab and respond to the following question: What are your observations related to diversity and inclusion/exclusion (race, ethnicity, gender, and age) within your host organization? What do you conclude about organization culture and leadership values from what you observe? Identify factors that shape inclusion and exclusion. *For full credit, upload journal entry to Sakai by Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Week of October 19th–Online Forum #2**

For this forum, interview two colleagues within your host organization to ask them about their work history. Your questions should include: their areas of undergraduate study and graduate study, their initial jobs, 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 from these interviews in the forum and provide what you found most interesting, important or surprising about what you learned. *In discussing individuals in your workplace, refer to them by initials only to protect their confidentiality.*
- 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?

**RESPONSES TO YOUR PEERS:** After reading the posts of your peers, feel free to ask them questions about their postings in order to create a dialogue. Make sure to check back to see what questions that I or other students ask you about what you have shared.

*For full credit, first posting due by Oct. 23; second post due by Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>; third post due by Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>*

### **Week of October 26th– Journal #4 Traditional vs. “Learning Organizations”**

Read the two fact sheets that explain and compare “traditional” and learning” organizations in the [resources] tab. Analyze what you have observed in your host organization, based on the specific characteristics of “traditional” and “learning” organizations. Does your organization fit clearly into one of these two frameworks? *For full credit, upload paper to Sakai by Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Week of November 2<sup>nd</sup> – Journal #5 Communication and Relationships at Work**

Read the fact sheets (relational coordination, psychological safety and challenges to communication) posted in the [resources] tab:

- How would you assess the quality of communication in your host organization?
- How does the quality of information flow affect your sense of being part of this organization and your ability to perform your work effectively?

*For full credit, upload paper to Sakai by Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>*

### **Week of November 9<sup>th</sup> PAPER #2 Analysis of Workplace Culture**

Review instructions above and utilize information in the [resource] tab. *For full credit paper must be uploaded to Sakai by Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Week of Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>– ONLINE FORUM #3**

Share highlights from your analysis of the culture of your worksite. Based on the initial posts, share your observations about similarities and differences in the organizational cultures encountered by members of this class. *For full credit, first posting due Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, second on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> and third on Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

### **Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>– Thanksgiving week, no assignment**

### **Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>– ONLINE FORUM #4 – Summing Up: The Value of Internships**

Read the following two short articles:

Perlin, Ross. (2011) Colleges Shouldn't Stick Interns with the Bill. Chronicle of Higher Education. April 24. <http://chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Shouldnt-Stick/127234/>

Charles Westerberg and Carol Wickersham (2011). Internships have value whether or not students are paid. Chronical of Higher Education, April 24. <http://chronicle.com/article/Internships-Have-Value/127231/>

Describe the key points made on either side of this debate. Share your opinions and conclusions about the value of your internship and any recommendations you would make for the LSER internship program. Compare and contrast your experiences and conclusions to those of your peers. *For full credit, first posting due Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, second on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> and third on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> – SUBMIT FINAL Paper**

See instructions pages 3 - 4. The final paper can be submitted earlier.