

SOCIOLOGY INTERNSHIP

(Sociology 498 B A Service Learning Course)

The University of Montana
Department of Sociology

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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OBJECTIVES

The internship program in sociology is designed to provide service learning experience in a public or private agency and to enhance knowledge and understanding in ways which utilize a student's academic background in sociology. The internship experience is intended to allow students to:

- Bring and apply knowledge and skills to the placement agency, thereby providing service to clients, agencies, and communities that meets identified needs.
- Foster an understanding of the placement agency's procedures, programs, and services.
- Develop skills, knowledge, and a professional point-of-view by observing and practicing expectations and responsibilities that apply to a professional position.
- Gain insight into possible career choices and provide experience relevant to job application and career development.

PREREQUISITES

Sociology internships are usually restricted to sociology majors. Junior standing and a 3.0 GPA are normally required, with at least 30 credits successfully completed at The University of Montana. Sociology majors should have a solid course work background in sociology including Introduction to Sociology (101S), Sociological Research Methods (318), Social Statistics (202), and at least two Major Content Courses (see Degree Checklist).

- Students pursuing a Criminology option must also have completed Introduction to Criminology (211) or Juvenile Delinquency (330) and Criminal Justice System (221).
- Students in the Inequality and Social Justice (ISJ) option must also complete Race, Gender, Class (220) or Gender and Society (275) and one ISJ elective options.
- Students in the Rural and Environmental Change option must also complete Introduction to Rural and Environmental Change (270) and one Rural and Environmental Change elective option.

A number of desirable internship placements require students to have special skills in word processing, grant writing, and/or research methods and data analysis. In such cases, applicants must demonstrate competency in these areas. It is the Sociology Department's policy to fully comply with all applicable Federal and State laws regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. When a disabled student is seeking an internship and prior to entering into an internship agreement with any agency or organization, a plan will be developed to assure that reasonable accommodations are made.

PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

The primary purpose of the internship program is to provide students with service learning experience in the day-to-day activities of an agency or program in which they can apply their sociological skills and knowledge to meet needs of clients/organizations, and/or the community. In order to receive academic credit, students must demonstrate analytic skills, gain new insights that build upon their previous course work, and connect aspects of sociological theories and concepts to their service experience. Consequently an internship involves a number of academic requirements. The procedures and requirements of an internship are outlined below.

1. Application and Interview with Prospective Agency.

Application for the sociology internship is a competitive process. Interested students must first contact the faculty person supervising internships for the semester during which the internship will take place (contact the Department's Administrative Associate to find out who this is). Students must submit an **application packet** to the faculty supervisor that includes: (a) a statement of interest in an internship; (b) an unofficial transcript; and (c) a current resume. Every effort will be made to match the skills and

interests of students with the needs of the placement agency. Ideally the faculty supervisor will contact the placement agency to confirm the availability of an internship and make arrangements for the student to **interview** with the agency. With prior approval of the faculty supervisor, students can develop their own internship placements. Students may be subject to a background check which may include official records and interviews with family members, friends, and neighbors. Additionally, some internships may involve UA tests. Having a criminal history or criminal associates may disqualify an internship applicant.

2. **Credits Earned and Hour Requirements.**

Students must register for academic credit by signing up for Sociological Internship (498) during the semester in which the internship takes place. A **minimum of two credits** of internship are required. Students may take **no more than 12 total credits** of internship, but internship credit may be taken over several semesters. Registration requires consent of instructor. As with any course, interns must pay the applicable tuition and fees.

Considering the needs of the placement agency and the availability of the student, the number of hours worked will determine the number of credits earned. As a rule of thumb, each credit registered for requires 50 hours of work experience during the semester. Thus, a 3 credit internship requires 150 total hours, or about 10 hours per week over the course of a 15 week semester.

3. **Academic Requirements.**

After the student intern has been accepted by the placement agency, an **internship agreement** is developed with the faculty supervisor. The agreement establishes the **goals of the internship** and clearly lays-out the academic requirements which must be completed. Toward the end of the semester, each student assesses his/her progress on these goals through a **goal assessment paper**. The student intern is also required to keep a **journal** of his/her experiences throughout the semester in a manner which does not violate standards of confidentiality. Journal entries should include reflections about the service work you are engaged in, the ways in which you are able to apply knowledge and skills from previous sociology classes to your work, and the impacts you believe your service is having at your site. Finally, each student must write a **literature review paper** which attempts to summarize and examine academic knowledge relevant to the internship experience. The literature review paper must be at least 8 pages in length, depending on how many credits are earned. During the course of the internship, students must make at least **bimonthly contact with their faculty supervisor**.

4. **Supervision.**

Internships in sociology are designed to help students acquire professional skills and insight. In order for this to happen, each student works under the direct supervision of a trained professional designated by the placement agency. This individual directs the student's activities, providing a broad range of experience while offering guidance and critical evaluation. As mentioned above, the internship supervisor will evaluate the intern's performance and will share the evaluation with the student.

Students are also expected to meet at least bimonthly with their faculty supervisor. The goal of these meetings is to integrate academic knowledge with the practical experiences of the internship. Additionally, these meetings allow the student and faculty supervisor to keep track of the student's academic progress and assess performance in the internship.

5. **Internship Supervisor's Performance Rating.**

Internship supervisors are asked to complete a **performance rating form**, provided by the Sociology Department, which evaluates the student's growth and performance, including a variety of performance criteria such as general attitude, responsibility, confidentiality, attendance, promptness quality of work, impact of the student's work, and overall performance. This form will be discussed with the student and is considered in establishing the student's final grade.

6. **Professional and Ethical Practice.**

Interns are expected to perform their duties in a professional and ethical manner. Internship activities and academic performance falls under the purview of the University of Montana Student Conduct Code. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code; the code is available at through the University Webpage under "Student Conduct Code."