

American University Washington Semester  
Journalism  
Spring 2007  
Professor Caroline Comport

## **Internship Course Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

The internship course is a dynamic part of your Washington Semester adventure. What you learn, who you meet and the real-world challenges you face will provide invaluable experience on which to make future career choices.

An internship allows you to learn by doing and to learn by observation. Your internship will also provide opportunities to build your network of professional contacts.

Students enrolled in the Washington Semester Journalism course must intern at least 16 hours per week. This course is designed to allow you to work at your internship every Thursday and Friday. You may work additional hours as long as they do not interfere in any way with your seminar or elective classes.

### **Course Objectives**

#### **I. Secure an Internship**

- \* search the Washington Semester Program internship database
- \* attend the Washington Semester Program internship bazaar
- \* read student evaluations of internships in the Reading Room
- \* arrange at least three interviews at different organizations
- \* format a professional resume, cover letter and thank you

#### **II. Build your professional network**

- \*treat your internship like a long job interview
- \*dress professionally for your internship
- \*be on time
- \*do even the smallest task well
- \*be dependable
- \*ask questions and show interest

#### **III. Evaluate your internship experience**

- \*what do I like / dislike about this internship?
- \*what type of assignments do I prefer?
- \*what skills do I need to learn / build on?
- \*how would a job in this field fit into my life vision?

## Course Requirements

### I. Internship Contract

You have two weeks to secure an internship. This means you should be starting your internship no later than the week of January 29th. Your orientation packet includes an Internship Contract that describes the responsibilities and expectations of your internship. The completed, signed contract must be turned in to your instructor by **Wednesday, January 31st**.

### II. Internship Supervisor Evaluation (40%)

Your internship supervisor will complete a Washington Semester Program evaluation form. Your supervisor should discuss this evaluation with you so you have a clear understanding of your review. The final evaluation signed by you and your supervisor must be turned in to your instructor.

### III. Interview Preparation Papers (15%)

- a. Resume
- b. Cover Letter
- c. Thank you Letter

Each student is required to turn in a hard copy of their professional resume for instructor review. In addition each student is required to turn in a copy of one cover letter and one thank you letter written for the purpose of securing a spring 2007 internship.

### IV. Networking Skills (20%)

#### a. Informational Interview

Select one person in your chosen field who is currently working in the Washington region. Conduct an informational interview with that person and then submit a written summary and analysis of what you learned from the experience. The 3-4 page paper should include the person's current position, educational background, and previous work experience. Other topics may include suggestions and advice for pursuing a similar position in this field,

why they chose this career path, and their predictions for future opportunities in their field.

IV. Reflective Papers / Class Discussions: (25%)

a. Weekly journals (15%)

Journals should be formatted by date with bullet points of internship duties, assignments for the day. Each journal should include a summary paragraph of weekly highlights and what you learned from your experiences. Journals will be due monthly. Please be prepared to discuss your journal highlights in class.

b. Internship Review (10%)

This 2-3 page paper should include the following: name of organization, type of organization, internship duties, what you learned over the course of your internship, highlights of your internship learning experience, what you liked / disliked about the internship, what skills you learned, what skills you would like to pursue, what you would or would not do differently, the current impact of the internship on your career goals. Please be prepared to discuss your internship review in class.

### **Assignments / Grading**

**Attendance / Punctuality Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Being on time is a must. If an illness or family emergency arises you must notify me before class begins. Each unexcused absence will negatively impact your final grade. Two unexcused late arrivals equal one unexcused absence.

**Class Participation:** Please be prepared to discuss your internship experiences in class including your journal highlights and internship review. Over the course of the semester we will have several class discussions and field trips related to the internship course.

**Deadlines / Spelling:** Any assignment turned in late will receive an immediate 5 point deduction. An additional 5 points will be deducted per day an assignment is turned in past deadline. Likewise spelling errors will also result in grade deflation.

**Key Deadlines:**

1/29 – Resume, Cover and Thank You letter

1/31 – Internship Contract

2/26 – Internship Journal # 1 (Jan / Feb)  
3/26 – Informational Interview  
4/02 – Internship Journal # 2 (March)  
4/23 – Internship Review  
4/23 – Internship Supervisor Evaluation  
4/23 – Internship Journal #3 (April)  
4/27 – Last day at your Internship

Assignment Title Format:

Name  
Internship Class – Spring 2007  
Title of Assignment  
Date

Note: All assignments must be stapled or bound. No loose papers please.

### **Final Thoughts**

I. Take care to select an internship that matches your career goals.

\*make sure the internship you accept balances meaningful assignments against clerical tasks. (i.e., 60% meaningful, 40% clerical)

\*make sure to interview your potential supervisor about the role interns play in their workplace.

II. Remember your internship can be the foundation of your career, a source of references and job leads for the future.

\*most internship experiences are directly related to the effort and enthusiasm put in by the intern.

\*a small job well done often leads to more interesting assignments.

\*don't forget to thank people who have helped you along the way.