COURSE SYLLABUS

INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm, Wednesday 10-11am, Thursday 2-3pm (for Spring semester 2019)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Whether you are a pre-career or mid-career professional in the Master of Public Administration program, it is highly encouraged that you complete an internship as part of your graduate school experience. Internships provide students with essential real world experience that cannot be replicated in the classroom. Internships allow students to experience the policy process in an exciting way as they observe and participate in policy formulation, its implementation, and evaluation in the bureaucracy. Students are able to take the theory they have learned in class and apply it to practice as they watch their agency/non-profit organization in real-time carry out their legislative mandate and/or organizational mission in providing services to the public. To learn from these experiences throughout the internship, students will analyze, synthesize, and reflect critically, all with the guidance of the internship coordinator.

Internships should be developed in consultation with the internship coordinator. Internships can count as either 3 credits (minimum) or 6 credits (maximum) depending on the current needs and interests of each student and can be completed at any point (even the summer) during your tenure in the MPA program. Each student is encouraged to pursue an internship that will contribute to their portfolio of experience and that promotes personal development. Internships ideally, although not always, lead to other job opportunities in the public/non-profit sector. As such, students are encouraged to make the most of their internship experience by putting themselves out there, making connections, and getting out in the community. Such actions can only help students in making the most of the internship experience and in creating new career avenues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In completing this internship, students will be able to:
  • Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the MPA classroom to real world situations
  • Understand how the bureaucracy operates in our political system
  • Identify strengths and weaknesses in administrative procedure so as to better serve the public
  • Be able to work well in a diverse team-environment in the workplace
  • Demonstrate graduate level writing, critical thinking, research, and analytical skills
  • Develop an understanding of the policy making process and how administrative agencies fit into that process
WORK REQUIREMENTS

Students should work at least 6-8 per week during the semester for 3 credits. This would amount to about 90-120 in total hours worked. Students desiring 6 credits are required to work 12-16 hours per week amounting to 180-240 hours worked. Internships that would fall outside of these parameters should be discussed with the internship coordinator.

Two evaluation forms will be sent to your direct supervisor to fill out detailing your performance in the internship. One will be sent at midterm (Week 7) and one at the end of the semester (Week 15). As noted below, these evaluation forms make up the bulk of your internship grade and will be made available to the student upon completion. Students are expected to be professional, punctual, and demonstrate a willingness to work hard and learn each and every day. Remember, you are not only representing the MPA program but the University of Montana at large. Your performance (or lack thereof) will influence how future students are perceived. Please maintain a high standard of performance throughout the internship to ensure employers continue desiring UM MPA students to fill their ranks.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

In addition to completing the required hours at the work site, internships in the MPA Program have rigorous academic components including the following:

1. Weekly Reflective Journal Entries. During every week of the internship, students need to submit a short reflective essay. This typed essay should include a description, and more importantly, a thoughtful reflection on what the student has done in the internship and how those experiences and observations connect to what they have learned in the class. These should be about a half page length and submitted each week by Saturday night.

2. Internship Analysis Report. Students completing a 3 credit internship should complete an 8-10 page analysis report on their internship experience. 6 credit internships should complete a 16-20 page report. The report should identify the main lessons to be learned from the internship and draw heavily on content from MPA courses offering insightful reflections on the internship experience. The focus and nature of the paper will be decided in consultation with the internship academic adviser.

GRADES AND WEIGHTS

For your internship, you will receive either a “pass” or “fail” grade dependent upon your performance in the above work and academic requirements.

CLASS POLICIES

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK

All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the professor:
1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, but not limited to, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary).
3. Assignments are due on the date/time listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted,
4. All assignments must be turned in electronically via Microsoft Word. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.

5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.

6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments (unless working in an approved team) and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

**NOTE ON TECHNOLOGY**

No “technology problem” excuses will be accepted in this class. That is, you cannot blame your failure to complete an assignment on time on “computer/internet/Moodle issues”. This means that you must not wait until the last minute to complete your work such that if you do have computer issues, you have time to find a solution. Three hints: try a different web browser, try a different computer, try a different Internet connection. The exception is you get one “retry” if your computer kicks you off while you submitting a document. I highly suggest that you save your work in multiple places. It is so imperative that you make this a habit now that you are in graduate school.

**NOTE ON LATE WORK**

Do not ask to submit an assignment late because the answer is already “No”. Never just plan on completing an assignment late. By doing so, you are taking a foolish, calculated risk of getting a zero. I only provide extensions in two circumstances. (1) If an emergency situation arises and you inform me BEFORE the due date, then I will consider your unique circumstances and make a decision. (2) If you have a disability AND have sent me an accommodation letter from Disability Services. Other than that, your work must be submitted on time. Your supervisor would not accept late and incomplete work. You should not expect your professor to do the same.

**NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, please view. As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.