

American University
Course Syllabus
Washington Semester Program
Internship Course
(4 credits)

Course Description and Objectives

This class is designed to help you maximize your internship experience by exploring practical issues that you will face, such as the search, networking, skill-building and securing a suitable letter of recommendation.

Internship course objectives

This course will:

- Assist you in having a successful experiential experience at your internship site.
- Explore common challenges and opportunities in the workplace including diversity, communication strategies and interpersonal dynamics.
- Identify skill sets that are helpful to career achievement and success in your field of study.
- Assist you in connecting theories and knowledge gained in seminar classes with “real world” experiences. Explore relationships between academia and practice.
- Identify diverse careers and career paths associated with field of study.

Internship course outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate professional skills such as resume and cover letter writing, job searching, interviewing, etc.
- Explain and give examples of the value of integrating “thought and action” i.e. academia and practice.
- Describe and apply strategies of professional communication and conduct.
- Articulate understanding of how to be successful in diverse and complex workplace environments.
- Present a self-analysis of what was learned from the internship experience and course, including evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, as well as growth in content knowledge of the field.
- Compare and contrast professional opportunities in this and related fields.

Guidelines and Expectations

Grading Scale

| Exemplary | | Good | | Acceptable | | Unacceptable | |
|-----------|----------|------|---------|------------|---------|--------------|-----------|
| A | 94%-100% | B+ | 87%-89% | C+ | 77%-79% | D | 60%-69% |
| A- | 90%-93% | B | 84%-86% | C | 74%-76% | F | Under 60% |
| | | B- | 80%-83% | C- | 70%-73% | | |

| Assessments and Final Grade Calculation | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Internship Supervisor Evaluation | 40% |
| Class Participation and Attendance | 10% |
| Internship Search Material and LinkedIn | 10% |
| Internship Billable Hours, Midterm Assessment and Skills Building | 10% |
| Informational Interview Paper | 15% |
| Internship Evaluation Paper and Portfolio | 15% |

Key Dates and Deadlines

Internship Search Material

Due: August 21 (mandatory office hours) and September 9 (final draft of resume, cover letter, self-assessment and LinkedIn)

Internship Fair, Wednesday, August 26, 1 to 4pm

Experiential Learning Form (ELF)

Due: September 9

Internship Billable Hours Sheet

Due: September 23 or two weeks after the start of your internship (billable hours #1) and October 15 (billable hours #2 and Midterm Assessment)

Midterm internship evaluation period begins (October 13-16)

Skills Building (Lynda.com)

Due: September 29

Informational Interview Paper

Due: October 27

Internship Evaluation Paper and Portfolio

Due: November 17 (Evaluation Paper and final assessment) and December 10 (final Portfolio) Last day of internship. (Final Internship supervisor evaluations due by December 4)

Course Schedule and Academic Evaluation

The following is a general and approximate outline of our class schedule for the semester.

Recommended (not required) Books:

Burnett, W., & Evans, D. J. (2018). *Designing your life: Build a life that works for you*. London: Vintage Books.

Pollak, L. (2012). *Getting from college to career your essential guide to succeeding in the real world*. New York: Harper Business.

Internship Session 1 (August 20)

Introductory meeting and intern search strategy discussion

Due: Internship Search self-assessment (attach to email of draft cover letter and resume) at required office hours on August 21 (two additional office hours will be discussed in class)

Required Reading: [NACE, "Career Readiness"](#) and Pollack #1, (12-15, 56-64, 209-224) (Blackboard)

LinkedIn page:

Design your own LinkedIn page and/or update your existing page

Use this [checklist](#)

Due: September 9 (email) final draft of questionnaire, resume, a cover letter and a completed LinkedIn.com profile (connect to all students in this class and Prof. Sosland). Attach to email your LinkedIn home and contacts in this course page.

Internship Session 2 (September 17)

Discuss internship, career and life goals

Required Reading: "Designing Your Life" (Blackboard),

Pollack #2, (144-155) (Blackboard) and

Sosland and Lowenthal, "Making the Grade" (Blackboard: WSP Related Research tab)

Read the *New York Times* article [Wealthy, Successful and Miserable](#) and

Think about these questions:

- What does it mean to you to live a fulfilling life? What role will happiness, meaningfulness, and impact contribute to your sense of fulfillment?
- How do you use time in your day-to-day life? How would you ideally like to use your time, and how can you get there?
- How do you manage work-life tensions and tradeoffs? How do you think about competing demands between family and career?

- How do you develop relationships that will sustain you—both at work and in life?
- How do you take care of yourself? How might you improve your self-care?
- How do you build your capacity for resilience?

See sample billable hours below. For the second billable hours sheet, add a completed midterm assessment (one page). Note: If you begin your internship after the WSP deadline (Jan 29), you are required to submit your first billable hours two weeks after your start date. Note your delayed start date in your billable hours.

Due: Billable Hours #1 September 23 or two weeks after the start of your internship

Due: Billable Hours #2 with Midterm Assessment October 15 (email and attach midterm assessment).

Internship Billable Hours sheet: Twice during the semester, you are required to submit a maximum of one double spaced page (you may attach completed projects) that details the previous week's internship experience. You will, as lawyers and business consultants do, account for your time by doing a billable hours report. You will also give the week's experience and your supervisor a grade and an explanation for that grade. Prof. Sosland recommends you go beyond outlining your daily activities and that you include analysis and personal feelings about your experience, including professional networking and interesting or humorous anecdotes. Ask important questions about the organization such as "why are they conducting business in this way." In the analysis section you may, include a critique of one or more of Pollak's readings #2, (144-155) (Blackboard).

Internship Session 3 (October 1)

Discuss the value of skill building for the internship and life-long learner for your career

Skills Building

Lynda.com

AU offers free access to Lynda.com trainings. There are hundreds of training videos to choose from. When you complete a training, Lynda.com will automatically place a symbol on your LinkedIn page.

Access Lynda.com for free through the AU Library

The webpage provides instructions for creation of a free account.

Select a class that takes at least two hours OR two classes that combined take two hours that are of interest to you and that you believe would be professionally useful.

Complete the classes on Lynda.com.

Take a screen shot of the symbols of completion on your LinkedIn page.

Due: Email Prof. Sosland by September 29 date and time with:

The screenshot of the symbols of completion and titles of the courses that you took and the time it took to complete them.

Required Reading: Sosland and Lowenthal, "*The Forgotten Educator*" (Blackboard: WSP Related Research tab)

Internship Session 4 (October 29)

Discuss informational interview and networking

Due: Informational Interview paper, October 27 (turn in hardcopy before start of first seminar)

Required Reading: Pollack #3, (101-113) (Blackboard)

Informational Interview paper: Select an individual whose career interests you (not your immediate internship supervisor) and schedule an informational interview. After the meeting, write up a **3 page** summary and analysis (don't just repeat the questions and answers) of the interview. This project is intended to broaden your understanding of an organization, provide you with more information about careers that interest you, add a new person to your professional network, and show the value of informational interviews. Here are some suggested questions: How and why did you get involved in your field of work? What is your educational background and do you think that graduate school is worthwhile? What other jobs did you hold prior to this position and which professional experiences were most valuable to you? What are your career goals and how have they changed over the course of your career? Do you have any advice or suggestions for me regarding my career and balancing my work and non-work life? See required Pollack reading #3 for additional advice on conducting an information interview.

Internship Session 5 (November 19)

Class discussion of internship evaluation and how you will assess your life

Due: Internship evaluation paper, November 17 (turn in hardcopy before start of first seminar).

Due: Internship Portfolio, December 10 (email only (no hardcopy) all internship papers and internship deliverables)

Required Reading: Christensen, "How Will You Measure Your Life?" (HBR) and Brooks, "The Moral Bucket List" *New York Times*, April 11, 2015 (Blackboard)

"9 of the Best Eulogies" <http://www.legacy.com/news/advice-and-support/article/nine-best-eulogies>

Internship Evaluation paper and Portfolio: Based on an evaluation of your billable hour sheets, your three assessments and your experience, you are to write a **5 page** paper that evaluates your internship experience. Include in this paper a discussion of the level of challenging work, amount of work, percentage of substantive work, quality of supervision, location/commute and office dynamics. Explain why you would or would not recommend this internship to other students and friends and give a letter grade to your internship experience and to your internship supervisor. Finally, explain the differences between what you observed in your internship and what you learned in your WSP seminars and other classes. For the last page of this assignment, write up the eulogy you hope will be given for you 70 years from now (see above readings for samples). Attach a completed final assessment of internship learning (see below).

Internship Session 6 (December 3)

Capstone Guest Speaker

Course Evaluation

Course Policies

Turning in Assignments: By the deadline, you must submit an e-copy of the requirement to sosland@american.edu. The penalty for turning in an assignment late is the subtraction from the grade of three points per 24 hours. The penalty begins immediately after the due time.

Requirement Format for all assignments: Turn in requirements with a 1-inch margin, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font and numbered pages. All papers need to be submitted as MS Word attachments to an email. Microsoft Word is available for free from AU for this course and all of your classes: <https://www.american.edu/oit/software/free-microsoft-office.cfm>

Please note AU's academic integrity policies. If you have questions about how to cite materials, please see the Writing Center, an AU librarian and/or Prof. Sosland. There is not a preferred citation style. Be consistent in using the same citation style within an assignment. Remember, when in doubt, cite.

Highly Recommended: Visit the Virtual Writing Center – You may visit the Writing Studio for all requirements. To receive credit you must submit a marked up drafts (see below for details on virtualWriting Center).

Class Participation and Attendance: We will meet on Zoom as a class approximately six times through the semester to discuss the internship, the assignments, and assigned readings. You will also meet with me during office hours. Due to the nature of the course, it is imperative that all students attend all sessions and that they come to each class **prepared to participate** in all discussions and all class interactions. Accordingly, attendance and participation are incorporated into the course requirements and grading system. Thoughtful participation is the cornerstone of a seminar styled teaching environment, and mandatory for this course. Regular attendance, in addition to participating, will ensure students the greatest exposure to the material and to the insightful comments of their classmates (thereby learning not only from the instructor, but from one another as well).

Zoom classroom guidelines/expectations for professionally approaching this course:

- Plan to be on time to our virtual classes as late entries are disruptive to others.
- Turn your camera on. If the camera is not on, it is very difficult for the professor or other speakers to gauge your participation, to engage with you and for teams to collaborate.
 - If you do not want to share your home in your background, set a background: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background>
- Sit or stand at a table or desk so that it is easy to focus and to look directly at the camera.
- Turn off all other digital/phone devices and websites.
- It is helpful to have a notebook to take notes on during a virtual class.
- Mute yourself when you are not speaking. This reduces background noise.

Class Attendance

The learning outcomes of the Complex Problems curriculum are not possible without regular attendance in class; in view of this, students should plan to attend every class meeting, in the specific virtual space the class meets in. Please keep the following in mind:

- According to American University’s Undergraduate Regulations, “Excused absences include major religious holidays (posted annually by the Office of the Provost and Kay Spiritual Life Center or verified by the Kay Spiritual Life Center as an excused absence for religious observance), medical or mental health events, approved disability-accommodation-related absences and approved varsity athletic team events.” If possible, students seeking an excuse should communicate with faculty in a timely manner and supply proper documentation where applicable. Students are not obligated to provide documentation for medical absences, and faculty should use reasonable discretion in those cases.
- All other absences are considered unexcused. More than three unexcused absences may be grounds for course failure.
- If a student has special circumstances (e.g. a prohibitive time zone, family obligations, technological access issues) that prevent regular attendance at synchronous class meetings, they should consult with faculty to devise a plan for meeting the course requirements and learning outcomes, with both student and faculty adhering to a principle of flexibility and fairness.
- Excessive absences, excused or unexcused, can change the nature of the course so that it is impossible for you to achieve the learning outcomes. In these cases, faculty and students should consult about options, including withdrawal, medical leave, or course failure.

Guest Lecturers

Regarding the proper approach to guest lecturers - many speakers will be delighted to respond to questions from the class and you are encouraged to do so (again, this is also part of the participation portion of the class), but be considerate and polite in your questions and manner of addressing the speakers. Occasionally, you may have an opposing opinion on a particular topic - feel free to question the speakers, but do so in a professional manner, i.e., be courteous and attentive of those who have generously given us their time to share their thoughts, expertise, and valuable experiences with us.

Additional Internship Resources

For Washington Semester Program internship resources, see <https://spexs-csm.symplcity.com>. To obtain additional internship advice, consult with Amy Morrill Bijeau, Associate Director of Internships and Career Advising. She can be reached at 202.895.4967 or morrill@american.edu. Internship advising hours can be found at <http://www.american.edu/spexs/interns/advising.cfm>. In addition to the events listed below, you might wish to consult the [AU Career Center calendar](#) to identify other potentially valuable offerings and RSVP for them.

Here to Career Events –

Wednesday, August 26, 1 to 4pm - Internship Fair – It is highly recommended that you participate in this event for at least an hour, including those who have already identified an internship. Information on how to participate will be sent from Amy Morrill-Bijeau.

Extra Credit: Choose two events from the ones listed below

- All events will be on Zoom at this link - <https://american.zoom.us/my/internandlearn>
- Be sure to check emails from Amy Morrill-Bijeau for schedule changes

- Though only two of these events are required, you are welcome to attend more.

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Tuesday, August 25, 6pm | Interview Like a Pro |
| Tuesday, September 1, 6pm | Know Where to Go: Self-Assessment |
| Wednesday, September 2, noon | Mindfulness at Work |
| Tuesday, September 8, 6pm | How to Succeed in Your Internship |
| Wednesday, September 9, noon | More Mindfulness at Work |
| Tuesday, September 15, 6pm | Unconscious Bias at Work |
| Tuesday, October 6, 6pm | Midpoint elevator pitch |
| Tuesday, November 10, 6pm | Bridge the Skills Gap: Land a job |

Extra Credit Events: Assignment Description:

- When you attend the two events of your choice, take single-spaced, typed notes.
- Title your notes with the event title, date, and time
- Include a section at the end of your notes titled, “Event Evaluation” and then describe and/or list things that you thought were worthwhile about the session as well as your recommendations for improving the session.
- Submit your notes from both sessions on December 3 via email as a MSWord attachment.
- As much as 5 percent extra credit will go toward your participation grade.

Student Support and AU Policies

American University Codes of Conduct

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University’s Academic Integrity Code which can be found at <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code01.htm>. It is expected that all assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, students have acknowledged awareness of the Academic code and are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code.

American University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual’s genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws (collectively “Protected Bases”) in its programs and activities. The university expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment (including dating violence, domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking) on any Protected Bases. [See [American University Policy on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](#)]

Resources

American University offers a wide range of support services:

- [Academic Support and Access Center](#) (x3360, MGC 243) AU offers individual academic counseling, skills workshops, tutor referrals, and writing appointments through the Academic Support and Access Center.

- If you have accommodations, please notify the professor with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center.
- For the Tutoring Lab, Writing Center, and Quantitative Support, visit: <https://american.mywconline.net/>.
- For Academic Coaching, visit: <https://auacademiccoaching.youcanbook.me/>.
- [Counseling Center](#) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.
 - Please note that American University has mandatory reporting requirements for professors and staff. Like most university employees, I am a mandated reporter, which means that some things students disclose, I am required by law to share with others. If you are seeking confidential options, please contact the [Health Promotion and Advocacy Center](#) or ordained clergy at [Kay Spiritual Life Center](#).
- [Center for Diversity & Inclusion](#) is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQI, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach and advocacy. 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center: 202-885-3651, email cdi@american.edu.
- [International Student & Scholar Services](#) has resources including academic counseling, [support for second language learners](#), questions about visas, immigration status and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources. (202-885-3350, Butler Pavilion 410)
- The [Dean of Students Office](#) offers one-on-one meetings to discuss academic, adjustment, and personal issues that may be impacting a student. The office also verifies documentation for students who have health issues that cause them to be absent from class.

University Statement on Sharing of Course Content

- Students are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings, including live streaming, of classroom lectures or any class related content, using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder, etc.) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes and any classroom discussions online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course. Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the [Academic Support and Access Center](#).
- To supplement the classroom experience, lectures may be audio or video recorded by faculty and made available to students registered for this class. Faculty may record classroom lectures or discussions for pedagogical use, future student reference, or to meet the accommodation needs of students with a documented disability. These recordings are limited to personal use and may not be distributed (fileshare), sold, or posted on social media outlets without the written permission of faculty.

AU – Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Please refer to the AU Web site (<https://www.american.edu/emergency/>). Since this is an online class, we will still meet online and maintain scheduled due dates if the campus is closed for weather or other emergencies.

Internship Search and Supplements

Bottom line: You must begin your internship by the Washington Semester Program deadline (see key dates). This start date affords you three weeks to locate the right internship for you. Familiarize yourself with the program’s resources, such as evaluations of internship experiences by former students and from various Washington directories.

Some of the course members will start the semester with an internship in-hand. For the rest, they will be spending the first few weeks of the semester securing their internship. If you are a member of the latter group, think hard about which is the right internship for you. Ask yourself, what do I want to get out of my internship experience this semester (a chance to try a profession in which I am interested in making a career; building a network of professional contacts, expanding my skills and résumé, a new experience and perspective, testing classroom theory to real world situations or all of the above)? What are the most important factors for me in choosing an internship (the type of organization, issue-area of work, name recognition, or type of work)? What type of work environment do I prefer (low pressure or have many deadlines; writing/research or fieldwork; formal or casual work environment; and independent or structured supervision)? Could I give my full commitment to this organization and could I be proud of my affiliation with this organization? To answer these questions and to be prepared for interviews, do your homework. Find out as much as possible about the organization, as time permits. For starters, look up their web site and do a database search.

You should arrange at least three interviews at different organizations. To be most effective during the internship search, you should have a “boilerplate” cover letter, résumé, writing sample, and list of references and contact information ready. **See Internship Guide for SPEXS, which is in your orientation packet and on Blackboard, for examples.**

Cover letter: At the outset, state that you are applying for an internship and specify what your interest is in working at their organization. Indicate that you are a student in the American University Washington Semester program and that you will be working three weekdays for a total of 20-24 hours per week, September to December. Also include a brief statement of your qualifications and highlight key elements of your formal résumé. You might also request further guidance as to what other information the organization needs to make a decision. (see attached)

Résumé: Include biographical and contact information, e.g., current address, telephone number, e-mail, etc.; educational record, previous employment, and relevant skills. (see attached)

Make sure both the cover letter and résumé are error free and professional. Don’t rely only on your spell checker or your own eyes. Prof. Sosland will look it over. Run your documents by the American University Writing Center and a friend.

Writing Sample: If available, choose a document that is not more than five pages and is relevant to the internship in which you are applying. A one-page memo addressing an issue the organization is presently concerned about is preferable.

The Interview: Here are some typical interview questions you should think about and practice in a mock interview with a friend: Tell me about yourself, why do you want to work here, what skills do you bring to the job, what are your most important weaknesses? Have some questions of your own. This not only allows you to gather important information, but also indicates your interest. For example, what will my specific responsibilities be? Who will be responsible for directing my work? Will there be other interns here on the days that I intern? From your vantage point, what are the pros and cons of interning here? At a minimum, ask for the timetable for making a decision. Immediately send a follow-up thank you email to the interviewer. This serves as a subtle reminder that they need to take action and signals to the interviewer your professionalism and commitment to following thorough on projects.

The Contract: To clear expectations by all parties and to reduce the potential for misunderstanding, the Washington Semester has the intern, intern supervisor, and faculty advisor sign a contract to assure clarity. Be sure to have a detailed discussion with your supervisor concerning your duties **before** you sign the contract, so you both have the same understanding about what will take place this semester. This careful process will help you avoid any misunderstanding and disappointment later in the semester. The contract will also serve as a basis for the performance evaluation for your supervisor to complete at the end of the term.

Make clear that you will intern three days a week (indicate the specific days) for a minimum of 24 hours per week. The rest of the week you have academic requirements and you are not permitted to miss any seminar classes, guest lectures, or site visits because of your internship. Also indicate to the work supervisor that he will be asked to prepare an evaluation at the end of the semester.

Course Requirements and Grading:

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| The Internship | 40% |
| Academic Evaluation | 60% |

The Internship: Your internship supervisor will complete a midterm and final Washington Semester Program assessment form (attached). The evaluation covers such skills and attributes as attitude, initiative, judgement, dependability, and working well with colleagues. You should meet with your supervisor at least two times during the semester to discuss your performance, any problems you have, and to invite constructive criticism. This will help your supervisor to start thinking about the evaluation early in the process. Also, at the end of the semester, you might decide to ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation.

If necessary, Prof. Sosland will be in communication with your supervisor. This is primarily to establish contact and to ensure that the internship is going well. If at any time you sense problems that you are unable to resolve, you should bring them to my attention. My role is to act as liaison and trouble-shooter in these cases. Such instances are fortunately rare, but do not hesitate to speak to me if your duties are unclear or the terms of your contract are not being met.