Course Description:
The internship is designed to provide opportunity to apply classroom learning, to practice and enhance skills, to experience professional socialization, and to explore a career. It also serves as a vehicle for the student to become more aware of personal strengths and identify areas in which further growth is needed.

The Sociology, Gerontology and Nonprofit Leadership (NPL) internships share a common structure and are administratively treated as one, combined course. The seminar part of the internships is conducted through the MSU Desire to Learn (D2L) online course platform.

Internship courses are variable credit. Students doing internships may register for 1 – 12 credits with instructor permission. Each academic credit requires 40 hours of supervised, documented internship work. Most internships earn three academic semester credits and require 120 internship hours. If these working hours are distributed across a fifteen-week semester, the student commits to working at least an average of eight hours each week.

The basic requirements for the internship are the same regardless of the number of academic credits: daily journals with reflections/applications; participation in two discussions; a mid-semester site visit (or substitute for distant sites); and a final paper.

The discipline of Sociology contributes important theoretical perspectives and significant knowledge to the Gerontology and NPL applications. Sociology, gerontology and NPL students are all invited to expand their perspective to encompass and appreciate the each other’s applications.

Note: Students may not register or start the internship without an agreed-upon learning contract signed by the student, field supervisor and faculty supervisor. Hours worked at the site without having a signed contract and being registered cannot be counted toward fulfillment of the required hours for the internship.

Purpose: The Sociology / Gerontology / NPL Internships are designed to:

- provide opportunities to apply classroom learning;
- acquire new knowledge;
- develop skills in applying sociological perspectives and methods in a real-life settings;
- experience professional socialization;
- help students become aware of professional and personal strengths;
- help students identify areas in which further growth is needed; and
• explore a career.

**Objectives:** Students completing the course will be able to:

- Describe the knowledge base and specific skills required to use their disciplinary perspectives and methods in a professional work setting.
- Discuss the complexities of professional practice and the factors related to positive social change.
- Describe how their academic training and field practice placement have prepared them for professional work in their discipline.

**Pre-Requisites:**

- Admission to the appropriate major, minor or certificate (Sociology, Gerontology, or Nonprofit Leadership); or by permission
- Junior or senior status
- Cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 at the time of application. (No D’s, I’s or IP’s in major)
- Recommendations from advisor and/or program director may also be required
- Ability to write correctly, concisely, and accurately
- Completed internship application and consent of faculty internship supervisor
- Completed learning contract signed by the student, field supervisor and faculty supervisor

**Possible Internship Sites:**

**Note:** Students should not contact the agency until approved for an internship by the faculty supervisor.

Possible placements include human service agencies; state, county or federal agencies; nonprofit community organizations; corporate employers; educational institutions or organizations; etc. Internship sites must allow for achievement of the student’s specific learning outcomes and must be able to provide competent supervision. The student works with the field supervisor and faculty supervisor to design an internship to meet his/her particular professional interests.

The final choice of agency and the interview process should be coordinated with the faculty internship supervisor. The student should be prepared to discuss insightfully how this fieldwork placement could strengthen his or her competence and marketability in professional practice.

**Agency Contribution and Responsibilities:**

The agency accepting an internship makes a critically important contribution to the professional socialization of the student and serves as a bridge between the University and employment in the field. The field supervisor is responsible for:

1. Orienting the student to the agency’s mission and operating procedures;
2. Reviewing the student’s first draft of the learning outcomes and assisting the student with refining them as necessary so they are appropriate guides to learning during the field experience;
3. Designing a work plan for the student;
4. Regularly observing and conferring with the student to monitor progress toward achieving the learning outcomes and adjusting the work plan as needed;
5. Participating in a mid-term site visit meeting with the student and faculty supervisor (or substitute phone or email communication for distant internships).
6. Conducting a final evaluation conference with the student;
7. Submitting a final evaluation of the student to the faculty supervisor.

Learning Contract:

*Note: Students may not register or start the internship without an agreed-upon learning contract signed by the student, field supervisor and faculty supervisor. Hours worked at the site without having a signed contract and being registered cannot be counted toward fulfillment of the required hours for the internship.*

Students will develop a learning contract specifying learning goals, methods used to meet those goals, and methods of evaluation. The faculty internship supervisor, the field supervisor, and the student shall sign the contract. *Instructions for creating the learning contract are available on the Internship webpage listed with Sociology program information on the Department of Sociology and Corrections website at [http://sbs.mnsu.edu/soccorr/sociology/internship.html](http://sbs.mnsu.edu/soccorr/sociology/internship.html)*

Registration:

After a signed contract is in place, the student should ask the faculty supervisor for permission to register for SOC 497 or GERO 497. The faculty supervisor will enter permission into the registration system but cannot register the student who must complete the online registration process himself or herself. Students enter the number of credits based on the agreement with the faculty supervisor and the number of internships they anticipate working. For example, for 3 credits, enter 0300. Do not register for more credits than can be completed that semester.

Evaluation of the Student:

The Internship is graded on a Pass/No Credit (P/NC) basis. A "P" will be recorded by the faculty supervisor when all requirements have been met at a satisfactory level of quality as indicated by the student’s performance, taking into account the journal, discussion contributions, the final paper, the required meetings with the faculty internship supervisor, the agency evaluation of the student, and other relevant information. Failure to complete any component of the requirements can result in a failing grade for the course.

Expectations of the Student:

While in the field, students are expected to exhibit a high level of maturity and performance as well as a willingness to expend maximum time and effort for the agency. The highest standards of professional conduct are expected at all times. Remember: you are representing the Minnesota State University, Mankato; the Department of Sociology and Corrections; and
yourself. Please make sure the experience is one of which we will all be proud. Professional misconduct, as defined by the field supervisor and/or the faculty supervisor, is adequate reason for termination of a placement, denial of future placements, and a final grade of Fail.

**General Plan for Internship:**

- In the first phase, the student may become oriented to the agency by reading procedure manuals, becoming familiar with office practices, and observing staff in the performance of their duties.

- Later the student should be able to perform tasks under relatively close supervision. For example, a student may do a report and have it compared to one done on the same topic by an experienced employee. Or, the student may be given the opportunity to interview a client under supervision. This is the phase in which the student "tries their wings" while being coached and critiqued relatively closely.

- When student is appropriately oriented and has had a chance to perform duties with supervision, he or she may be able carry out responsibilities similar to those of regular entry-level employees of the agency. While individual situations will vary, it is intended that students will proceed as quickly as possible into this phase and give significant service to the agency throughout their remaining time. In addition to in-house work, many agencies are able to provide other kinds of experiences for the student such as accompanying staff to conferences, participating in team meetings, and visiting related agencies in the community.

**Requirements during Internship:**

After you are registered go to Desire2Learn on the MSU website for dates, instructions, and other useful resources.

1. **Journals:** The student maintains a daily journal as a record of activities, observations and reflections on how learning goals are being met. We expect students to use the language of sociology (or, as appropriate, gerontology or nonprofit leadership). The journal serves as a source of information that will be helpful in the writing of the final report and in tracing their personal and professional development. **The first two daily journals should be emailed to the faculty supervisor for his/her feedback.** Subsequent journals are submitted in the D2L Dropbox every two weeks by the listed deadlines.

   Guidelines for “Keeping Good Journals” are available on the Internship information page listed under the Sociology Program on the Department of Sociology and Corrections website at [http://sbs.mnsu.edu/soccorr/sociology/internship.html](http://sbs.mnsu.edu/soccorr/sociology/internship.html) and on the Content Page for this course in D2L.

2. **Online Discussions:** The intern interacts with other students in the field through an online discussion board during the semester. Each student will post at least three or more discussion
items during each of the two designated weeks. The D2L content page provides detailed instructions for discussion participation.

Students initiate discussions by responding to several questions in the readings provided on the D2L Content Page. Student answers should be posted by midnight on Monday of the designated Discussion Weeks. Students read other students’ postings. By midnight on Wednesday, each student posts at least one comment and at least one question for at least one other student. Students are required to comment on and ask questions of the student whose original posting is after theirs in time or just above theirs in the discussion listing. They may comment or ask questions of additional students as well. By midnight on Friday, students will respond to the comments and questions directed to them.

3. **Site visits:** The faculty supervisor will visit local agencies at some time during the semester to meet with the student and the field supervisor as feasible. We will substitute a phone interview or email communication for distant sites or if we are unable to coordinate a meeting time with local agencies.

4. **Communication:** If, at any time, the student feels she or he is having communication problems or any other difficulty with the internship, she or he should contact the Faculty Supervisor immediately. Likewise, the field supervisor should contact the faculty supervisor at any time there is a need to discuss the placement.

**At the End of the Internship:**

1. **Evaluation:** Upon completing the internship, the student shall request a written performance evaluation and have it sent directly to the faculty supervisor by the last day of the semester. This report may take the form of a narrative letter or may be submitted on an evaluation form normally used by the agency. The agency supervisor is asked to:
   A. Verify the total time on site spent by the intern;
   B. Evaluate the performance of the intern;
   C. Assess the suitability of the intern for future employment.

2. **Final Paper:** Each student will write a paper summarizing what he or she has learned through the internship. Papers will apply appropriate concepts, theories and perspectives (sociology, gerontology, and/or NPL concepts, theories and perspectives). Guidelines for the paper include:
   - Three or four pages, typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.
   - Written in a scholarly manner with an introduction, appropriate subheadings, and a conclusion.
   - ASA format with appropriate citations as needed

   _The most important aspect of the final paper shall be a synthesis of the insights you gained from the internship and how you applied the perspectives and/or methods of your discipline in the internship situation._
Submit a copy to the faculty supervisor in the Dropbox in D2L and the field supervisor by the last class day of the semester. Sociology majors should also place a copy in their portfolios for use in senior seminar and/or for help in developing a résumé or job application cover letter and preparing for job interviews.

**Failure to Fulfill Obligations to Placement Site or Faculty Supervisor:**
Students are required to fulfill the obligations stated in the learning contract and any other expectations of the host agency as they would in regular employment. If you must be absent from your duties due to illness or some other emergency, please notify the field supervisor immediately as you would your employer. Failure to fulfill any of these obligations will result in a failing grade for the internship. If there are any problems with your internship experience, please contact the faculty internship supervisor immediately.

**Gerontology Minor or Certificate Internship Credit:**
Students completing the internship for the Gerontology minor should use ideas and materials from their own major discipline and Gerontology courses. Please identify the disciplinary sources for such ideas and materials.

**Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Internship Credit:**
Students completing the internship for the Nonprofit Leadership Certificate should use ideas and materials from their own major discipline and Nonprofit Leadership courses. Please identify the disciplinary sources for such ideas and materials.

**Faculty Internship Supervisor:**
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