

MPA Internship
POLS 5610, FALL 2014
SECTION 0, CRN 41220
1 - 12 Credit Hours

Advisor: Dr. David Edwards
Office: 417D Fletcher Hall
Office hours: By appointment

Phone: 425-4068 or 4281
Email: David-Edwards@utc.edu

DESCRIPTION

The MPA internship provides students with work experiences in a public agency or nonprofit organization to give them realistic exposure to organizational-bureaucratic environments. This experience should develop the student's knowledge of the internal dynamics of public service organizations, promote their identification with the public service ethos, and provide an opportunity to test and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes discussed in MPA coursework.

Students receive 3 credit hours for each 150 hours worked. Most internships are 3, 6, or 12 credit hours for 150, 300, or 600 hours of on-site work, respectively. Regardless of the total number of hours worked, internships must last at least 10 weeks.

All pre-service MPA students are required to complete a 6 credit hour internship. For in-service students—that is, students who have had considerable experience in the public sector or are currently in the public sector—the internship is optional. In-service vs. pre-service status is determined by the MPA program director.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

All internships share the following learning objectives:

- The student will gain professional public service experience.
- The student will become familiar with the procedures, structure, and context of a government agency or nonprofit organization.
- The student will be able to interpret the organization's public service in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, democracy, and the public interest.
- The student will learn about and come to identify with the ethos of the public service profession.
- The student will demonstrate integration and application of previous coursework.

More specific learning objectives for each internship will be developed jointly by the student, faculty advisor, and site supervisor.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Grading will follow these general guidelines:

A (90 – 100%) = Excellent; all expectations met or exceeded; explicitly demonstrates thorough understanding; no substantive shortcomings or only minor shortcomings; writing is well organized; adheres to rules of grammar, spelling, and syntax with no or very few exceptions

B (80 – 89%) = Good; most or all expectations are met; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates

good, if not thorough, understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings; writing is generally well organized; mostly adheres to rules of grammar, spelling, and syntax

C (70 – 79%) = Satisfactory; directions are followed, most expectations are met but with at least one significant shortcoming; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding; writing is organized well enough and with enough technical accuracy to be understandable

D (60 – 69%) = Passing, but less than satisfactory; directions only partially followed; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding; and/or writing is difficult to understand

F (0 – 59%) = Failing; not completed or directions not followed; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding; and/or incoherent writing

No extra credit assignments will be given. The graded requirements and other requirements follow:

Internship agreement (required) At the beginning of the internship, faculty advisor, and site supervisor will develop a plan for the internship including the learning objectives, how those learning objectives will be achieved, and intended products of the student's work. The intern and site supervisor should discuss any confidentiality requirements that should be included in the agreement. The intern is responsible for developing the plan with input from the supervisor and advisor, and both the supervisor and the advisor must approve the plan. An internship agreement form is available on the Blackboard "Forms, etc." page. An electronic copy should be submitted via the "Assignments" link; copies of the signed hard copy should be provided to the instructor and site supervisor. The agreement form is due by the end of the second week of the semester.

Plagiarism tutorial and quiz (5 percent) All students must complete University of Southern Mississippi's online plagiarism tutorial at <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php> and take a quiz based on the tutorial. Instructions are available on the "Assignments" Blackboard page. The quiz is due by the end of the second week of the semester.

Evaluation by site supervisor (35 percent) A form will be provided to the site supervisor for evaluating the intern's performance. The form will be provided at the beginning of the internship, and interns and their site supervisors are encouraged to use the form as the basis of ongoing evaluation throughout the internship. The final form must be submitted by the end of the final exam period.

Discussion board participation (10 percent) Beginning by the second week of the internship, students will post discussion board entries no less than twice per week, and preferably more as a member of a community of learners. At least one weekly entry will include, at a minimum: 1) A description of tasks assigned to the student; 2) A description of what the student did to complete the tasks and an assessment of how well the tasks were completed; 3) The student's ongoing reflections on the internship experience, particularly as the experience relates to previous courses, learning objectives, and personal goals. At least one additional weekly entry will respond to another student's entry, making a substantive contribution (that is, much more than a passing comment) to help other students think through their tasks, solve problems, and relate their internship experiences to previous courses, learning goals, and personal goals. Students should inform their supervisors that they will be participating in this online discussion and discuss appropriate confidentiality requirements, to which students should strictly adhere.

Internship project paper (30 percent) The internship project paper will include an introduction of the organization where the internship was completed, followed by a discussion of the project selected for in-

depth analysis. This description will discuss the goal, challenge, or research question addressed; the relationship of the project to the theory and knowledge of the political science, public policy, or public administration disciplines (including a review of the relevant scholarly literature); the strategy adopted for addressing the problem (including tasks completed and/or research conducted); the outcome of efforts to address the problem (including the results of the work and/or research findings); recommendations that arise from the project; and a discussion of the project relating it back to theory and previous scholarship. All papers must demonstrate that the student has approached the internship as a student-scholar; a heavy emphasis of the paper must be in locating the internship project in the broader scholarly literature. This will require relating the internship project to a minimum 7 peer-reviewed sources, probably mostly in the literature review and discussion sections of the paper. Organization of the paper may vary for some internships; the faculty advisor will work with the student to develop a suitable structure for the paper. Most papers will be between 15 and 20 pages. All papers should adhere to APA formatting. Students may submit drafts and receive written feedback up to one week before the last day of classes in the semester. The final paper is due by the last day of classes.

Internship project presentation (5 percent) Interns will give an online presentation based on their internship project papers to their fellow interns and the instructor. Presentations will be made via the online discussion board. The presentations may be fairly simple, such as an executive summary of the paper, the full text of the paper, and some discussion questions, or they may be more elaborate, such as narrated slide presentations or videos. Regardless of their format, presentations must be of a quality that contributes to everyone else's learning. All presentations must convey the most important elements of the papers with a particular emphasis on how the project relates to a broader scholarly literature. Presentations must be posted to the discussion board by the fifth-to-last day of classes. (For example, if the last day of classes is on Friday, the presentations must be posted by end of day on the prior Sunday.)

Presentations discussion (5 percent) During the presentation week, interns must participate in discussion of their own presentations and the other interns' presentations. At a minimum, interns should post at least five substantive comments or thoughtful questions about other interns' presentations and respond to questions and comments about their own presentations. Discussion of presentations will end on the last day of classes (before exams).

Self-assessment paper (10 percent) In a second paper, students will offer an assessment and explanation of the degree to which they achieved their learning objectives for the internship, providing evidence to support their assessments (such as by describing tasks completed, appending documents written for the internship, etc.). The paper should address both the learning objectives provided in this syllabus and any learning objectives developed by the student and on-site supervisors. The paper should conclude with a summary of the most important contributions of this internship to the student's education. Thorough papers will most likely be in the range of 5 to 10 pages (appendixes excluded). The paper is due by the last day of classes.

Record of on-site work (required to receive credit) Interns will work with the site supervisor, in consultation with the faculty advisor, to identify tasks to be performed on site. All tasks must contribute to the student becoming acclimated to the internship site and then to achieving the learning objectives for the internship. In addition to smaller tasks, the student must identify, in consultation with the faculty advisor and site supervisor, at least one project for in-depth focus that provides an opportunity to apply public administration theories and knowledge to a specific goal or challenge faced by the organization with a greater level of responsibility. In all of their work, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism and to represent UTC well. Students and supervisors are encouraged to discuss expectations for professionalism at the beginning of the internship. Students must keep a record of hours worked for the internship. This record must document that the required number of hours is completed by the intern (with any exceptions approved in advance by the advisor). The record must be signed by the

site supervisor and submitted to the faculty advisor by the last day of the final exam period. Students completing paid internships may use their timesheets for this purpose.

Incompletes As required by UTC's academic policies, a grade of incomplete will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work but is unable to complete the full requirements of the course for a valid reason. Students wishing to request a grade of incomplete must consult with the advisor no later than two weeks before the first day of final exams. The granting of any such request is at the discretion of the advisor. If the request is granted, all work must be submitted by four weeks before the last day of classes in the following semester or the I (incomplete) will become an F.

Academic integrity Careful adherence to standards of academic integrity is expected of all students. Standards of academic integrity will be discussed in class, but students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they understand and follow these standards. To this end, students are encouraged to consult the student handbook's discussion of the UTC honor system. To protect the academic integrity of this university and this course, the instructor takes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously and seeks the most severe sanctions available in response to instances of academic dishonesty.

Calculation of final grade Generally, final grades will be calculated based on the percentages indicated above. However, final grades may not be higher than the grade assigned by the site supervisor on the internship evaluation form. Exceptions to this policy will be made only after consultation with the student and site supervisor.

BLACKBOARD

Students are responsible for accessing forms, submitting assignments, participating in the discussion board, and receiving email via Blackboard. Blackboard may be accessed at <http://www.utc.edu/learn/>.

STUDENT SERVICES

ADA STATEMENT: Attention: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 425-4006 or come by the office, 102 Frist Hall <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/DisabilityResourceCenter/>.

If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438 or <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/CounselingAndCareerPlanning/>.

HONOR CODE PLEDGE (from the [UTC Student Handbook](#)): I pledge that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any test or assignment. I understand that plagiarism constitutes a serious instance of unauthorized aid. I further pledge that I exert every effort to insure that the Honor Code is upheld by others and the I will actively support the establishment and continuance of a campus-wide climate of honor and integrity.

NOTE: The internship program follows the guidelines recommended by NASPAA. Some of the wording used in this syllabus is either based on or copied from the NASPAA internship guidelines, available at www.naspaa.org.