

English 488: Internship in Professional Writing

Spring 2003

Details

Meeting time	Thursdays, 3:30pm-5:20 p.m.
Location:	3:30-4:20 p.m.—210 Heavilon Hall 4:30-5:20 p.m.—246 Stanley Coulter
Instructor:	Dr. Jennifer Bay
Office:	404 Heavilon Hall
Phone:	496-1650
E-mail:	jbay@purdue.edu
Office hours:	Thursdays 1:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment
Class website:	http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~jbay/488/

Description

This course provides you with a continuous period of on-the-job experience as a writer in a professional setting. You will intern in a local organization and participate in a weekly seminar in applied rhetoric. The seminar is designed to contribute to your internship by preparing you for your workplace experiences and by giving you a regular opportunity to discuss observations, problems, and accomplishments that arise for you.

As you proceed with the internship experience, you will gain practical experience functioning as a writer within a professional organization. You will develop skills in “reading”—or recognizing and analyzing—the culture of your particular organization, and you will apply this knowledge in order to adapt to the culture, contribute to the organization’s work, and eventually identify possibilities for innovation. As the semester proceeds, you will become more adept at thinking in terms of a social perspective when working on writing tasks in your organization, and you will be better prepared to develop and apply social knowledge and analytic abilities in future workplace experiences.

Finally, at the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to update your job materials in preparation for finding full time employment as a professional writer.

Materials

Various online and digital articles

If you don't already own a good style manual, you might consider purchasing one or more as reference tools for your internship. I can make recommendations based on the type of internship.

Expectations

You will be expected to work an average of 8-10 hours per week for your host organization. Depending on the nature of the internship, this work may or may not be completed on the job site.

You will be expected to approach your job as responsibly as any regular employee. By taking on the internship, you are making a commitment to go to work when expected, to notify your contact in the host organization if you must miss a day or be late, and to fulfill all your job responsibilities to the best of your ability. Your organization will expect you to demonstrate a fully professional work ethic.

You will also be expected to demonstrate flexibility—a willingness to accommodate your fellow workers, and to adapt to the particular conditions of your work environment.

You must treat your host organization with tact and respect. This might entail, for example, keeping confidential information to yourself or taking care not to show proprietary (company-owned) materials to anyone.

Host organizations have the option of terminating your internship at any time (though this is extremely unlikely to happen). Keep in mind that regular and prompt attendance at your worksite at the expected times will be the minimum requirement for fulfilling your organization's expectations.

Early in the semester you will confer with your contact in the host organization to establish 4-8 goals that you intend to accomplish during the internship. Examples include:

- Conducting research with creativity, accuracy, and completeness.
- Writing documents that are effective in meeting the information needs of their intended readers and that reflect an understanding of the organization's textual conventions.
- Displaying a positive attitude when provided with constructive feedback on work-in-progress; using feedback from reviewers to revise documents effectively and to improve as a writer.
- Working cooperatively as a team member; demonstrating the ability to compromise and to negotiate with others towards a consensus opinion or decision.
- Where appropriate, taking the initiative to make independent decisions or to begin new projects without direct supervision; asking questions when necessary, but managing projects mostly on your own.
- Managing your time effectively; establishing a schedule for tasks and budgeting time appropriately.
- Learning a new writing-related software.

Evaluation

Internship itself—50%

Your internship host will complete two evaluations of your work for the organization: one at the middle of the semester and one at the end of the semester. Your grade will be determined based on these evaluations and on my observations about your work.

A semester-long worklog that chronicles your work and reflects on the internship—30%

Participation in class activities—10%

Revision of your resume, cover letter, portfolio, and job application materials—10%

Academic Integrity

Purdue students and their instructors are expected to adhere to guidelines set forth by the Dean of Students in "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students," which students are encouraged to read here:

<http://www.purdue.edu/ODOS/administration/integrity.htm>

The preamble of this guide states the following: "Purdue University values intellectual integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. To be prepared to meet societal needs as leaders and role models, students must be educated in an ethical learning environment that promotes a high standard of honor in scholastic work. Academic dishonesty undermines institutional integrity and threatens the academic fabric of Purdue University. Dishonesty is not an acceptable avenue to success. It diminishes the quality of a Purdue education, which is valued because of Purdue's high academic standards."

Academic dishonesty is defined as follows: "Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [University Regulations, Part V, Section III, B, 2, a] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]"

Work Log

You will be expected to keep a regularly updated weblog of the work that you perform for the organization, as well as observations about the workplace culture of the organization. Details will be distributed soon.

Attendance

Attendance is required at all scheduled class meetings and conferences with the instructor. Since this class takes a workshop approach, it is essential that you come to class prepared and ready to assist your fellow interns. Three absences may result in your final grade being lowered by as much as a letter grade. More than three absences can result in a failing grade for the course. Excused absences may be granted for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, provided you make a written request to me no less than two weeks in advance and that you complete any required work before the due date. Not coming to the second hour of class in the computer classroom will be counted as an absence. Being excessively or regularly late for class meetings can also be counted as an absence.

Preliminary Calendar

Date	Topic Covered/Assignment Due
January 16	Introductions Meet individually with instructor about internship Complete student information sheet and email to instructor Contact your internship supervisor and schedule a time after January 23 rd to meet about the internship.
January 23	Revising the resume and preparing for the interview Bring your resume and any portfolio materials to class for workshop. Review resume information: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/ http://www.rpi.edu/dept/llc/writecenter/web/resume.html
January 30	What to expect on the job Sherry Southard, "Protocol and Human Relations in the Corporate World: What Interns Should Know." Chapter 1 of <i>Internships in Technical Communication</i> , "Internships: The Student Perspective."
February 6	First observations and questions
February 13	
February 20	
February 27	
March 6	
March 13	NO CLASS —Student conferences with instructor.
March 20	NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
March 27	
April 3	
April 10	
April 17	
April 24	
May 1	
May 5-10	Meet during final exam time to discuss internships

