**Guidelines and Policies Governing Sociology Internships**

**Description:**
Xavier’s Catalog describes SOCI 4950 as follows: “This course involves the placement of a student in the field at a non-profit agency, governmental office, etc. under the dual supervision of an on-sight evaluator and an assigned faculty member”.

Internships allow students to link the knowledge and skills they have been learning in class to the “real” world. They also serve as work experience and an opportunity to network with local professionals in working in students’ area of interest. Thus, students should complete the internship late in their tenure as an undergraduate, to explore or to define career options in light of the skills and knowledge they have acquired in classroom coursework.

A minimum of **110 hours** are required to complete this course. This may include hours required for training. Students must keep a log of their weekly hours, signed each week by the on-sight supervisor and submitted to faculty mentor. These hours must be completed before the last day of regular class.

Each internship is different, but common standards and rules apply in regard to: setting up the internship, completing required paperwork, professional standards at placement sites, and submitting written work to the faculty mentor. These rules are detailed in subsequent sections of this document. Several forms are required.

**Prerequisites (use these to determine when you should begin the process):**
- major or minor in sociology
- completion of 12 or more hours of coursework in Sociology
- senior or junior standing
- Instructor approval (a faculty member formally agrees to serve as faculty supervisor/mentor)
- Demonstrated ability and maturity to work in a professional setting with minimal supervision
- Agency/organization approval and identification of an on-sight evaluator

**Course Objectives (use these to evaluate the appropriateness of a particular site or to look for one):**
- To allow students to link theories, concepts and skills from coursework in sociology to a professional setting.
- To allow students to explore careers and work environments that employ the knowledge and skills acquired in classes.
- To identify and to analyze specific sociological concepts that affect a real life work environment.
- To experience the process of learning the culture of a particular organization and applying that knowledge to work efficaciously within an organization: its history, mission, client population, funding sources, and organizational structure.
- To help students develop their research skills through applying sociological research techniques.

**Rules and Policies for Completing the Internship:**

**SOCI 4950 (and 4903) are different from any course you’ve ever taken.** All of your other courses are scheduled, planned, and run by faculty. **Internships are initiated, set up, and scheduled by you (in consultation with a faculty mentor).** You are responsible for finding a site, scheduling, facilitating communication between site and faculty supervisors, detecting problems, and submitting paperwork; ultimately, you determine what you learn as well! This is a student-led effort (that you are graded on).
If you wish to complete an internship you should begin the planning process NO LATER than the very beginning of the preceding semester (that means January for a Fall internship and August for a Spring term placement). In general, faculty are NOT available to plan internships during the summer (although they may wish to supervise them on a case-by-case basis).

Your faculty mentor may be your adviser, but a range of factors could prevent that individual from serving in that capacity. If your adviser cannot serve, discuss either changing the timing of your internship, your ideas for site placement, or the possibility of another member of the sociology faculty supervising your internship. Keep in mind that faculty may also believe you do not meet the prerequisites, such as demonstrated ability and maturity to work in a professional setting with minimal supervision. Faculty must preserve the ability of future students to be accepted as interns in the New Orleans area by maintaining high standards in terms of which current students represent us.¹

**Preliminary Steps (begin a YEAR before your internship):**

- Share with your adviser your thoughts about when you plan to complete an internship.
- Discuss with your adviser what your “ideal” placement would be.
- Make plans to be available for 10 or more hours of work during the semester you plan to intern (i.e., you probably cannot take classes and intern and expect to maintain your normal paid-work routine).
- Ask other majors about their internship experiences.
- Following these preliminary discussions, formulate a list of possible internship sites.² Prepare a resume
- Set up an appointment with Career Services (on campus) to have your resume reviewed, to do a mock interview, and to get advice on professional attire (especially for interviews)
- Prepare a portfolio to share with future field placement supervisors.³

➢ Part of the value of the internship experience is learning how to identify and pursue opportunities to use your sociological expertise. Therefore, although faculty advisors will be happy to help you with this process, identifying and arranging the internship with an agency or office is your responsibility.

**Securing an Internship and Finalizing Plans with your Faculty Mentor (beginning a semester before)**

- Obtain formal written consent from a faculty mentor to supervise your internship by the second week of September (for a Spring placement) or February (for a Fall placement).⁴
- Once you narrow your list of possible sites, send a letter of interest with your resume, asking for an opportunity to speak with someone regarding an internship placement (a professional email with an

---

¹ Faculty members receive minimal compensation for supervising internships. This means you should try to motivate them to and that you should understand if they cannot mentor you.

² In addition to emails about possibilities you will get forwarded to you from us throughout your time as a major, we also maintain a book of previous emails that you could consult for ideas.

³ This could be a set of papers, power point slides, or other projects you’ve completed. Even just one simple writing sample can give the impression that you are capable of professional work.

⁴ A faculty member agreeing to mentor you does NOT mean you are cleared to register for the course the following semester. You still have to secure an internship.
attachment is acceptable). Be specific about why you are interested in a particular site and what specific activities or project you would hope to engage as an intern. Reference anyone who told you about that organization. Follow up by phone if you do not hear back within two weeks.6

- Meet with a few possible placement sites in person. Consider this a job interview!
  - Professional attire and behavior
  - Arrive at the location in the city 30-45 minutes early (in case of traffic or other delay)
  - Bring another copy of your resume, as well as a copy of your portfolio
  - Spend time preparing a list of specific questions. Discuss these with your mentor beforehand.
    - Consult the course objectives and learning outcomes, as success depends on the organization being able to give you meaningful, professional experiences that apply to your coursework.7
    - Remember that the person you speak with may have little sense of what you can offer, so be prepared (use your portfolio and resume as props) to show them how you can add value to their organization.8
    - Interviews are a two-way process: you want them to get excited about hosting you, but you must also learn whether the organization can offer you meaningful, interesting experiences.

- When you have located an internship and made a verbal agreement with them about the scope of your involvement, your hours, and your supervisor, give this information to your internship advisor (see proposal form). The proposal form is due before May 30 or before November 20.

- The faculty mentor will send a letter to the host agency, which will serve as a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions (see form). It outlines our expectations, your responsibilities, and informs the supervisor about the specifics of the evaluation we will be asking them to complete. This is due by August 25 or December 1.

- Be sure to ask about the following in case you need time to plan for their requirements:
  - Immunizations or proof that might be required
  - Background checks (and whether there is a fee)
  - Details about any necessary training before beginning the internship
  - How the 110 hours will be scheduled within the semester

The Internship Experience

- A week or two before your internship is set to begin, contact your site supervisor and faculty mentor to remind them that you will be starting soon.

- Before classes start for the semester you are interning, you must do the following:
  - Send your faculty mentor a formal request to be registered in SOCI 4950
  - Meet with your faculty mentor to receive your syllabus

---

5 Many agencies have formal, established internship programs. In those cases, follow whatever application procedures they dictate to secure an internship.

6 Be sure to use proper phone etiquette and to begin by asking for the person who would be able to speak to you about an internship (don’t ask the person answering the phone).

7 A host organization MUST be able to use you as they would a professional, NOT CLERICAL STAFF. This does not mean you cannot assist with clerical duties, but the agency must have a project, program, or set of professional duties you can undertake that will require the skills and knowledge you’ve acquired as a sociology major.

8 There is a list below of specific activities you could propose. Although it is specific to health-related internships, it could be adapted to any community, government or research agency.
In addition to finalizing your schedule and other details, the faculty member will review with you the expectations and assignments for the internship. These vary, so be sure to get a syllabus.

1. The most important part of completing your internship is to report on time according to the agreed on schedule of hours. At a minimum, agencies should be able to report that you were reliable when they complete your evaluation.

2. If the activities you are completing are not along the lines of those agreed upon (e.g., you are not engaged in activities that relate to your sociological training) you must report this to your advisor so the three parties (advisor, intern and supervisor) can remedy the situation. It is important you address this at the time, because if you are not engaged in meaningful activities it will affect your grade because you will not be able to complete the written assignments effectively.

3. Keep a log of your experience. This journal should be a record of your dates, hours, activities and reflection about the day’s experience as it relates to sociology. Consider this similar to taking field notes if you were a sociologist doing field research. The content of these sociological reflections will vary according to your internship, but you should show that you are exercising your sociological imagination as you intern.

4. Complete, have signed and submit weekly hours logs (see form)

5. Report to your instructor at the end of each month (3 times). This meeting is for a verbal check-up on your experience as well as to show your progress on your internship log. This is a formal meeting, not just a pop-in during office hours.

**Policies governing your internship:**

- **Unexcused Absences:** Unexcused absences will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Students are to see their field placement as professional responsibility requiring similar behavior to that expected of a hired employee. All absences should be approved three days in advance. Student having an unexcused absence will result in termination of senior internship and the student having to repeat the senior internship.

- **Tardiness:** A limitation of two (2) occasions of tardiness will be permitted. Students exceeding the two (2) minimum occasion of tardiness will be terminated from the senior internship and the student will have to repeat the senior internship.

- **Dress code:** Students are to dress professionally at all times. For men, they should wear a dress shirt, tie, slack, and shoes. Men are expected to be groomed at all time. Hats on any kind should not be worn during field placement site hours. Women are expected to wear professional length slacks, professional length skirt or dress. Do not interpret coworkers’ casual attire as an invitation to “dress down” unless you are specifically instructed to do so.

- **Evacuation Expectations:** In the event that classes are cancelled due to severe weather (e.g., hurricane or flooding), please contact your agency and your instructor immediately and stay in contact. All groups will work together in planning a strategy for the remainder of your internship.

**Important reminders for interns:**

- Remember at all times that you are Xavier’s representative. Your punctuality, reliability, speech, appearance, and work reflect not just on you but also on your peers and future students.

- If you encounter problems of any kind, you should report them immediately to your faculty mentor so that a resolution or termination of the course can be arranged.
You will likely be dealing with personal or confidential information about people during the course of your internship. Be very careful at your internship, in your written work, and in your conversations outside the internship about respecting individuals’ privacy.

This is much different from a normal teacher-student relationship (where we are paid to help you learn). Your host site and supervisor do not owe you anything. They have agreed that you will be engaged in activities that go beyond secretarial tasks, that they will supervise and evaluate you, and that you will be able to intern 110 hours. Ideally, they will benefit from your presence, but catering to your needs might not be a priority. Be respectful of their situation. Often the most successful interns are those that appreciate a situation and offer to help in some way.

If you do not feel satisfied or feel uncomfortable in your situation, first discuss it with your instructor before complaining to your supervisor. Your advisor can help you decide what course of action to take, or to act on your behalf if necessary.

Completing your internship

6. When you have finished your hours or you are getting close, you must arrange for your instructor to send the evaluation form to your supervisor to complete. Please make sure the supervisor has about two weeks to complete this evaluation. The supervisor should email or send the evaluation to your Instructor.

7. Complete the paper or project the faculty member assigned. These vary but in general it is an 8-10 page paper focusing on how a few key sociological concepts were salient to your internship experience. This paper is usually due at the beginning of the final exam period.

8. Complete the Student Evaluation of Internship form.

Appendix A: Checklist of forms and paperwork required to set up and complete an internship

- Resume
- Completed appointment with career services
- Portfolio
- Faculty consent to mentor form
- Internship proposal form
- Memorandum of Understanding Form
- Reminder email to agency and mentor about upcoming internship
- Email request to register in SOCI 4950 (requires completion of all of the above)
- Syllabus
- Completed, signed and submitted weekly hourly log forms
- Weekly logs detailing activities
- Monthly meetings with faculty mentor
- Request to faculty mentor to request evaluation by site supervisor (email)
- Completed paper/project (as per syllabus)
- Completed student evaluation of internship (submit to faculty mentor)
Appendix B: Sample/Example Placements

- community health center,
- school,
- government office,
- community-based organization,
- research facility,
- court,
- non-profit agency (advocacy groups, support groups, policy groups, etc),
- elected official’s office,
- police department

- government agency
- assisting a social worker working in an agency
- assisting an attorney working in an agency
- National Organizations
- Government Organizations
- Local and State Health Departments
- Community Centers or Community Health Centers
- American Public Health Association
- State Public Health Associations
- Community-based Organization

Appendix C: Activities a sociology major might do in an internship setting

A. Planning Activities
   1. Literature reviews
   2. Community needs assessment
   3. Conference and or Webinar Planning
   4. Assisting with Delivery Health Intervention
   6. Conducting community-based health promotion
   7. Social Marketing and or Health Communication Campaign
   6. Grant writing

B. Program evaluation and health research activities
   1. Designing studies
   2. Designing data collection instruments and procedures
   3. Collecting data (e.g., surveys, interviews, archival data extraction)
   4. Database preparation and maintenance (e.g., data cleaning, programming, variable classification and coding, designing and updating coding manuals)
   5. Working with data entry systems
   6. IRB preparation and activities

C. Program/Project Management
   1. Setting priorities
   2. Creating and maintaining teams and partnerships
   3. Conducting meetings
   4. Developing staffing patterns
   5. Monitoring progress
   6. Creating and implementing mid-course corrections

D. Communication
   1. Written reports and findings
   2. Graphics, slides, or other aids in communicating results
   3. Oral presentations
   4. Disseminating results (e.g., community feedback, newsletters, and reports to study participants).