English 4990
Professional Communication Internship

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PREREQUISITES
All interns must be of junior standing and have an overall GPA of 2.5 before starting an internship.

DESCRIPTION
In this course, you will build on the skills you have gained through your coursework at Armstrong. You will also be learning new skills that are unique to the working environment of the internship you choose. An internship can provide you with a network of colleagues and the experience you will need to gain a job once you graduate.

FINDING A QUALITY INTERNSHIP
By now you have selected your core area under the Professional Communication track. Consider what types of internships might help you build on the skills you have gained or will be gaining in your coursework. If you are unsure of what type of internship you would like, consider what job you would like to secure upon graduation. What kinds of skills might your future employer be seeking? Remember, you can use this internship opportunity to make connections and network within your field. Future employers are known to hire former interns, and some of Armstrong’s interns have gained permanent positions at their internship sites upon graduation. Your internship supervisor’s clients or customers might also be looking for skilled employees. If you are still unsure about your career path, contact Career Services. They have information on what career might best fit your interests and abilities.

Ultimately, you are expected to find your own internship and do much of the research on your own. Researching, applying for, and interviewing for an internship are all part of the internship’s learning process. You will be using these skills in the future when applying for a job. Once you have decided on the type of internship you want, you can explore the list of internship opportunities available in my office. However, you should not limit yourself to this list. Examine local companies. Talk to people whose work interests you. Ask them about the possible need for an intern at their organization.

You also may not want to limit your research to local companies. There are many national and international internship opportunities (The federal government offers internship programs, as do national companies such as Disney.) For these internships, however, you will want to prepare well in advance because they usually have early application deadlines.
CONTACTING COMPANIES/INTERNSHIP SUPERVISORS
You will want to contact companies to ask if they need or have had interns. When discussing internship opportunities with possible supervisors, you should be aware of the types of skills you would want to practice and gain during the internship. For a list of these skills, you will need to look at the Internship Agreement. You want to avoid internships that limit you to performing repetitive, nominal tasks that don’t challenge you or build on your skills. Ask the supervisor or company representative if the organization has ever had interns. Ask what tasks, exactly, you would be performing.

There are a myriad of different kinds of internship supervisors. Some will offer a lot of guidance and direction. Others will expect you to work on your own. You might be working in a team, or you might be working alone. In whatever situation you find yourself, you will need to be your own advocate. You are the one who controls what you get out of the internship. The more challenges you set for yourself, the more you will learn and achieve.

INTERVIEW
Most supervisors will want to interview you before they offer you the internship. You should be prepared for this interview. Do research on the company to find out what, exactly, the company does. Be prepared to give clear examples of your skills and work history. Prepare a set of questions about the types of tasks you will be performing. Be sure to bring a copy of the Internship Agreement and the Midterm and Final Assessment forms, so you can discuss Armstrong’s requirements. For other tips on interview preparation, see Career Services.

INTERNESHIP AGREEMENT
The Internship Agreement form is available in my office and on the website. You will need to fill this out with your internship supervisor. The agreement includes a list of skills that you could be practicing or developing and also asks you to describe the overall internship. You and the internship supervisor are to sign this agreement. This agreement serves as contract between you and your supervisor: you are expected to perform the duties described on the contract, and the supervisor is expected to allow you to perform these duties. You are to give the original copy to me, keep one for yourself, and give one to your supervisor. It is best to have electronic copies and we document all internships electronically.

If, during the internship, you feel that this agreement is not being upheld by your supervisor and you are not being allowed the opportunity to perform the tasks described, discuss this with your supervisor. If you are hesitant or unsure of how to broach the subject, speak with me, and we can discuss how you might go about approaching your supervisor. Remember, you are in charge of what you get out of this internship. The agreement serves to protect both the supervisor AND you.

The goals of the internship are as follows:
- Build on skills you have gained in coursework and develop new skills
- Become familiar with an office or work environment and be able to operate within it
- Work successfully on a team
- Work successfully under a manager or supervisor
- Develop problem-solving and conflict-management skills
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to your internship duties, you will also be required to do the following:

1. Register for a Career Services Pre-Internship, one-hour workshop. These are offered a different times through the semester. Contact the Career Services Office for the current schedule: https://www.armstrong.edu/departments/career-services
2. Develop a resume to be turned in with the Internship Agreement.
3. Contact a company and conduct an initial interview with an internship supervisor.
4. Fill out the Internship Agreement with your internship supervisor and turn in a copy to the Internship Director (me).
5. Write a 1,500-2,500 word essay due on the last day of classes for that term.
6. Collect samples of work during the internship in an internship portfolio.
7. Obtain assessments at midterm and finals (I will contact your supervisor directly with these forms).

ESSAY DESCRIPTION

Your 1,500 to 2,500-word essay should include the following:

1. a narrative summary of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the internship
2. an evaluation of what you learned during the internship and how it broadened your professional experience
3. a description of any problems you may have faced and how you resolved them
4. an evaluation of how the internship prepared you for your future career

The essay should be typed, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman size 12 font. It should be organized and thoroughly proofread. If you have difficulties writing this essay, remember to make use of the writing center or talk to me. An outside reader can help spot issues of clarity and places where you might need more elaboration. A reader can also help you uncover areas you have not yet discussed.

You are not required to turn in a daily log of your activities. However, you will want to journal your activities on a daily or weekly basis, so you have information you can use in your final essay.

CREDIT HOURS AND GRADING

An internship can be taken for 3, 6, or 9 credits, depending on the number of hours worked and the job requirements of the intern.

3 credits=150 hours (approximately 10 hours/week in fall/spring, and 15 hours/ week in summer*)
6 credits=300 hours (approximately 20 hours/week in fall/spring, and 30/week during summer)
9 credits=450 hours (approximately 30/week in fall/spring, and 40 hours/week in summer)**

You are given a pass or fail grade. Your grade is based on your final paper, your portfolio, and two assessments done by your supervisor.
Your internship supervisor will be given a midterm and final assessment form to fill out. I will be emailing these forms to your supervisor at midterms and finals, but you should bring a copy of these forms to the first meeting with your supervisor, so you can discuss how they will be evaluating you. You should also read these forms, so you are clear on how you are being evaluated.

*NOTE: The summer term estimates are based on a 10 week schedule for work. You may fit the hours into the official 8 week summer term, but most students begin their internships 2 weeks before the start of term to spread the hours over 10 weeks. The goal is to get the overall required hours by the end of term. It is best to establish a weekly, set schedule with your supervisor for all terms.

**NOTE: 9 credit internships are highly competitive and rare. They arise from official, advertised positions with organizations who have a history of maintaining and recruiting for their own vetted internship programs. Working a 450 hour schedule does not guarantee enrollment in a 9 credit internship at Armstrong. See the U.S. Department of Labor and Wage Division’s Fact Sheet on internships for more information regarding internship programs and the Fair Labor Standards Act: https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf

REPEATING THE COURSE
While 1 internship is required, students may complete more than 1 internship (up to 9 hours) for credit toward their degree. Additional internships can satisfy major field elective requirements.

COURSE POLICIES
You are to follow the organization’s policies given to you by your internship supervisor. You should also dress professionally and BE ON TIME. Just as you are expected to arrive to class on time, you are expected to arrive to work on time. Before the internship begins, you should discuss with your supervisor how you are to notify the supervisor when you are sick and need to miss work. There should be clear guidelines, and you should follow them. DO NOT miss work without notifying your supervisor first.

ARMSTRONG HONOR CODE AND CODE OF CONDUCT
All students at Armstrong must agree to abide by the Honor Code and Code of Conduct. You should read and be familiar with the Honor Code and Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook and online at www.sa.armstrong.edu/Activities/hccoc.html.

Updated April 3, 2017