**Field Experiences in Professional Communication**

# **“The Classroom of One”**

# **COM 398 – Fall 2019**

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**Course Description: “The Classroom of One”**

We call it “the Classroom of One.” Imagine a class with only one student and one professor … and that professor is a professional doing the kinds of things the student wants to learn to do. Mentorship is the No. 1 “ship” of internship. The opportunity for one-on-one teaching and learning, plus the development of professional relationships becomes an important by-product of the intern’s work and the professor’s mentoring.

Field Experiences are an exciting step for students from classroom learning to professional experience and Comm. 398 is a course designed to enhance and support that experience for students. This class may be repeated for credit up to the university limit of 16 credit hours for professional practice. First internships for credit are, by policy, 3 hours each. Second and subsequent internships for credit may be obtained for a minimum of one hour credit. All interns should plan to put forth a minimum of 144 hours of professional effort to their internship.

By definition, a Field Experience is a cooperative professional experience in communication among:

• intern, student … a student in the School of Communication on Field Experience;

• employer … where the Field Experience takes place;

• supervisor … the student’s supervisor where the Field Experience takes place;

• coordinator … Field Experience faculty coordinator in the School of Communication at Illinois State University.

1. • Students are expected to excel in their internships … to contribute to the goals of the organization in meaningful ways.
2. • The Field Experience should be instructional and fun. Internships help students learn about career choices, build a portfolio, develop their professional network and gain valuable insights about the professional world.

Other key elements define the course, its purpose, and its value:

***Professionalism:*** Essentially, interns are employees; they are expected to behave, act and dress in a way that respects the job, the employer, professional colleagues, and organizational culture. Interns’ experience may limit performance, but they are expected to display a level of professional conduct equal to that of their professional peers and colleagues.

***Mentorship:*** This defines the educational and professional relationship between professional supervisors and interns. It is a vital component of the internship experience and the reason internship supervisors should be professional communicators who have the leadership and experience to contribute to the professional development of interns.

***Reflection:*** “Doing” and “learning” in a professional setting is the foundation of an internship, but the student’s ability to place that experience in a meaningful context through reflective writing allows the student to better understand the value of the “doing” and “learning” at a higher level. “What I did” is important to an intern’s development … but writing coherently about “what I learned” raises the value.

***Evaluation:*** Unlike most other classes, evaluation for Comm. 398 is a collaborative effort among the intern, the internship supervisor and the internship coordinator for three purposes:

* to support interns’ experiences in learning, growth and professional networking from the internship;
* to expand and enhance interns’ professional performance;
* to assist the internship coordinator in assigning a grade for a class which is part of interns’ permanent academic record.

**Course Goals**

In the course of their internship and completing the requirements for Comm. 398, students will:

* gain first-hand knowledge and experience about the professional area that they have chosen, including:
  + the atmosphere, attitudes, and values of an organization.
  + the purpose, structure, and operation of an organization.
  + the communication functions and their relationship to an organization’s mission and goals.
  + a view of the decision-making process in an organization.
* have the opportunity to engage in professional activities related to their studies and career goals;
* apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom into the professional production with a purpose that impacts people;
* learn to deal with the challenges and opportunities of communicating in an organizational context;
* interact with professional colleagues to learn about their work and receive feedback about their performance;
* experience professional opportunities and responsibilities similar to those of graduates in their first professional positions.

**Internship Schedule**

**Starting date**: August 20 or later (this may vary, however, your 144-hour minimum required time DOES NOT BEGIN until you have enrolled in COM 398).

**Last official work day for interns**: December 6 (final official date for Fall 2019 classes—students may have varying departure dates, but this one is so we can post your grade).

**Ultra-Network: Join Hire A Redbird Now**

1. Go to <http://careercenter.illinoisstate.edu>.
2. Click on [Hire-A-Redbird](http://www.careercenter.ilstu.edu/hire) tab on the upper left-hand side of the screen.
3. Click on Student login.
4. Access your account through ISU’s Central login.
5. For first –time users:
   1. From your Homepage, click on “Profile” on the upper left-hand side and complete your Personal and Academic profile.
   2. Click “Save”.
6. To add an internship record, go to Profile – Internships.
7. Click on “Add New Experience”.
8. Fill out all internship information.
9. You may only enter an internship record one semester (“work term”) at a time. If your internship period lasts longer than a semester, submit the first work term. Then click on “Edit” and go to the bottom of the page and click on “Copy to a new Work Term. “ Enter the relevant time period for that term.
10. Click “Submit.”
11. The internship record will be “Pending” until it completes the system verification process. Upon completion, the record will be shown as “Approved.”
12. You may review and edit internship records at any time.

**Professional Practice**

**Time Commitment**: For each hour of credit earned, students are required to spend a minimum of 48 hours working on their internships, with a minimum of 144 per internship for a semester. This includes time spent both on location, and working on projects away from the internship’s location, including research and on-line efforts. Most interns spend more than the required number of hours, and some internships require more hours because of the nature of the work and the business. **Students are urged to discuss time commitment with their supervisors before accepting, or beginning, their internships … including planned time off for Thanksgiving break.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Credit Hours | Semester Weeks | Average Weekly Internship Hours | Minimum Total Hours |
| 1-3 | 16 | 9 | 144 |
| 4 | 16 | 12 | 192 |
| 5 | 16 | 15 | 240 |
| 6 | 16 | 18 | 288 |
| 1-3 | 12 | 12 | 192 |
| 4 | 12 | 16 | 240 |
| 5 | 12 | 20 | 288 |

**Early Communication About Professional Commitment**: It is up to interns to initiate discussion about time commitment requirements before the semester and/or internship begins. Students who wish to conclude their internships before the last scheduled date of the semester must secure written approval from their internship supervisors to the Director of Field Experiences. Any “time off” from regularly-scheduled internship activities (even scheduled university breaks) MUST be cleared with the internship supervisor in a professional, timely manner by the intern. Just “not showing up” is unprofessional and grounds for dismissal by the internship supervisor and, potentially, a failing grade for the semester.

**Communication of Evaluation Documents**

The Field Experiences instructional staff DOES NOT share reflective essays produced by interns with their supervisors and, similarly DOES NOT share evaluations from supervisors with interns. However, the instructional staff reserves the right to, independently, encourage interns and supervisors to share information from those documents when the staff determines that it would be beneficial to the students.

**Evaluation of Interns:**

The evaluation of students for this course is based on four components:

* Mid-term Evaluation from supervisor
* Final Evaluation from supervisor
* Reflective Essays from student interns
* Other influencing factors as determined by the internship director

**Internship Supervisor Evaluations (Midterm & Final):** Information provided by the internship supervisor will be the basis for 60% of the student’s grade. Mid-term evaluations will be worth 25% of the final grade, final evaluations will be worth 35% of the final grade. The internship coordinator will provide a supervisor evaluation instrument to the internship supervisors approximately two weeks before the final return date. These evaluations will recommend a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) for the student’s performance and answer questions about their work, professional behavior, knowledge in the area, and professional performance. Supervisor evaluations are NOT shared between the internship coordinator and the intern, although it is strongly recommended that the supervisor share the evaluations with the intern. **The internship director is responsible for sending and collecting these evaluations** (although communication help from interns is sometimes valuable).

***Note: Please refer to calendar at the end of this syllabus to see evaluation dates.***

Grades are awarded based on the quality of interns’ professional performance and evaluated in the context of the general expectations from an upper division university student at Illinois State University. Letter grades recommended by internship supervisors should reflect the following standards:

**A** “if I had an opening for an entry-level person, this intern would receive an interview;”

**B** “I would recommend this intern for an entry-level position in our profession;”

**C** “this intern has behaved professionally and made an effort to accomplish tasks assigned.”

**D** “the inconsistent effort and/or professional attitude of this intern has restricted the value of the experience.”

**F** “this intern has consistently failed to demonstrate acceptable professional effort.”

***Note 1: All supervisor evaluations are subject to final review and evaluation by the internship coordinator prior to an assigned grade by the internship coordinator.***

***Note 2: Students who leave their internships without supervisor approval, or are dismissed from their internships for any reason, prior to the time indicated on their applications for a permit to enroll are subject to a default grade of “F” for the term.***

**Professional Development Plan—Getting More from the Experience**

While not required for School of Communication interns, a professional development plan can help interns understand the people and the culture of their workplaces, which can make them more productive. Many supervisors will recognize the suggestions below from new employee orientation programs, and they can work the same way. However, both interns and professional supervisors should feel free to initiate discussions any or all of these topics.

* Office tour & staff introductions – answers “who,” “what,” and “where” for interns in a new environment.
* Mission, vision and organizational goals – getting interns invested in the bigger picture enhances productivity.
* Office culture discussion – from how to dress to answering the phone to the boundaries of casual conversation.
* Aspirations & professional path – taking interns where they are and advancing their professional perspectives.
* Navigating tough situations – where interns should go and what they should do when things go wrong.
* Seeking opportunity & growth – how interns should mature through challenges in the workplace.
* Building a network -- how networking has helped the supervisor’s career; the interns’ experiences with networking.
* Developing a professional portfolio – adds long-term value to the interns’ creative outputs and outcomes.
* Raising the resume – expressing “why” and “how” help future employers see potential value on interns’ resumes.

*NOTE: These topics were initiated and developed with the help of Dr. Erin Thomas, director of assessment and engagement initiatives for the office of the vice-president for student affairs at Illinois State University—and an experienced professional supervisor for SoC interns.*

**Reflective Essays**

Please reread the definition of ‘reflection’ at the start of this syllabus as a reminder of why reflection is important to the internship experience. Since writing is still the No. 1 skill necessary to practice professional communication, these assignments ask interns to express themselves thoughtfully and professionally at the interns’ highest level of performance.

• ***Instructions for Reflective Essays.*** Each intern should write two reflective essays of 250 to 500 words which respond to **one of the prompts in one of the tables below** for each of the two required reflective essays.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If your internships begins after Sept. 16 and/or ends before Nov. 8, you should email the program director, WITHIN ONE WEEK of submitting your paperwork, proposing two alternative dates for submitting reflective essays. You can choose your own dates – but you MUST notify the program director of the alternative dates within the time period specified. All work must be completed before Dec. 6.*

This is the time to create a window into your experience…on which not only allows you to reflect on the value and importance of what you do, but also allows the teaching staff a peek at your life as an intern.

The first chart is for first-time interns for credit. The second is for interns who have previously completed an internship for credit at Illinois State University in COM 398 (internships without academic credit or who do professional practice under other course numbers, either in the School of Communication or other majors/minors, DO NOT qualify for the second graphic). Each prompt asks that you reflect upon your experiences as an intern and write about people, conditions, efforts and/or projects. Interns may use each prompt only once. Please note ‘blackout dates,’ which mean that the ‘blacked out’ prompts cannot be selected for those assignments. Below are instructions for writing the Reflective Essays:

* + Save as a “Word” file to your computer
    - IMPORTANT: Label the file with YOUR LAST NAME then the word “reflective” and the number of the reflective essay for that semester
    - Example of a label: LAMONICAreflective1
  + In the heading, interns should include
    - their name
    - name of internship supervisor and employer
    - the number of that reflective essay
    - the subject matter of the reflective essay.
  + When composing the essay, remember to put the subject in the context of your experience and your future. Keep in mind these questions:
    - **What?** (Describe the event, incident, individual or effort based on the subject of the essay … use examples; describe situations and people which explain what happened.)
    - **So What?** (Why is the event, incident, individual or effort important? Who benefits? To whom was the effort valuable? What did you learn from it?)
    - **Now What?** (In what context is the event, incident, individual or effort important to the intern’s internship AND to the intern’s future efforts … how does this open the door to future opportunities or responsibilities? How does it impact the organization’s future, the supervisor’s future, the intern’s future?)
  + Each essay should be professionally written, with plenty of time built in for each of the following:
    - A written draft.
    - Reflection.
    - Revision and editing.
    - More reflection and revision.
    - Attention to Ranly’s “7 Cs” (listed below) to gain credibility for your writing.
    - Final editing and submission as a Word Document
    - Follow the instruction below to submit your essay
  + Interns who have questions or their own ideas to submit for the Reflective Essays assignment should contact the internship coordinator. Interns are encouraged to submit reflective essay topics not listed.
* **Instructions for Reflective Essays:** Please send your essay electronically to the “Assignments” tab on the COM 398 ReggieNet page. NOTE: Everyone registered for COM 398 should automatically have access to ReggieNet. If, 24 hours after you register, you do not have access, contact the Center For Teaching, Learning and Technology as you would for any other ReggieNet class.
  + **Accessing the Field Experiences Assignments :**

1. Go to <https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu>
2. Under the assignments tab on the left-hand side.
3. Click on ‘Essay 1or Essay 2’ as appropriate.
   * **Submitting Reflective Essays:**
4. Click on the browse icon.
5. Click on the “Add” button and select a document.
6. Repeat step 2 if you need to submit more than one document
7. Click “Upload”
8. Click “Close” and check back in a week to read the instructor’s comments about your reflective essay.

* **To receive your grade:**

1. Please access ReggieNet from COM 398. Please give your instructors one week to grade your essay. Email either instructor if you do not have a grade after one week.
2. Select the second document under you r submitted essay and download.
3. The comments and overall grade will be on the right-hand side.
4. Review the document and contact the instructor with any questions.

**Reflective Essay Prompts**

**FOR ALL FIRST TIME INTERNS FOR CREDIT**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Reflective Essays *(note: prompts which are 'blacked out' are not options for that essay number).* | Reflective Essay #1 (due Sept. 27) | Reflective Essay #2 (due Nov. 1) |
| *The first big surprise of my internship came when …* |  |  |
| *I came to understand what my organization is about when …* |  |  |
| *Before I started this internship, I never would have believed that …* |  |  |
| *I improved a key professional skill when I had the opportunity to …* |  |  |
| *My organization demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement or community service by …* |  |  |
| *Success! When I completed this project, I knew I had contributed to my organization’s goals by …* |  |  |
| *I gained a new perspective about group work when I collaborated with colleagues to …* |  |  |
| *I heard the voice of this communication professor when …* |  |  |
| *When I was asked to \_\_\_\_\_\_ in my internship, it was a good thing I had taken \_\_\_\_\_\_ class …* |  |  |
| *My ideas about leadership have gained better focus through …* |  |  |
| *A person (not my supervisor) who has helped me better understand our organization and my role in it …* |  |  |
| *Professionally, my internship has changed my mind about …* |  |  |
| *If I could begin this internship again, I would be sure to …* |  |  |

**Advanced Reflective Essay Prompts**

**FOR EXPERIENCED INTERNS FOR CREDIT (1 or more previous internships for credit)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Reflective Essays *(note: prompts which are 'blacked out' are not options for that essay number).* | Reflective Essay #1 (due Sept. 27) | Reflective Essay #2 (due Nov. 1) |
| *The most noticeable difference between this internship and my previous internship(s) is … …* |  |  |
| *This internship has the opportunity to further my journey on my career path by …* |  |  |
| *This internship has allowed me to demonstrate and enhance my leadership abilities by …* |  |  |
| *This incident incited me to compare/contrast the leadership styles of this internship and a previous internship …* |  |  |
| *The concept of civic engagement is more personal to me now because of …* |  |  |
| *I realized that I need to expand my career options when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ happened during this internship …* |  |  |
| *I am a little more certain about my career path because …* |  |  |
| *The most challenging thing I have done during this internship is …* |  |  |
| *I knew I had a portfolio piece from this internship when I began producing …* |  |  |
| *One of the things I have learned from this internship is that I NEED to learn more about …* |  |  |
| *My internship experience has found me a professional mentor, and this is why he/she is so important to my career and my life …* |  |  |
| *The organizational culture at this internship is different from a previous internship location because … (and explain which is better …)* |  |  |
| *Because of this internship, my next step in professional development should consider …* |  |  |

**Internship Supervisor/Coordinator Evaluations:**

Below students will find a description of the distribution of points in this course:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Maximum Pts.** | **Percentage** | **Grade** |
| Supervisor Midterm Evaluation | 25 | 25 |  |
| Supervisor Final Evaluation | 35 | 35 |  |
| Essays (2 essays, 20 pts. each) | 20 | 40 |  |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Percentage** | **Points** |
| A | 90 - 100 | 90-100 |
| B | 80 – 89 | 80-89 |
| C | 70 – 79 | 70-79 |
| D | 60 – 69 | 60-69 |
| F | 0 – 59 | 0-59 |

The final grade is based on the following scale:

**Course Policies**

### **Completed Form.** All interns must submit a completed “Internship Form” including email addresses, phone numbers and street addresses for both the student and the internship supervisor before being extended a permit to enroll. These can be submitted in person at the Field Experiences office (456 Fell), in the School of Communication Main Office (request the form be placed in the Field Experiences director’s mailbox) or via email to the director.

### **ILSTU email.** All interns must have regular, daily access to an ilstu.edu email account. Other email accounts will not be used or recognized. Email is the primary course of communication. The fact that the intern may be located in another region or state DOES NOT excuse the intern from this university requirement.

### **Late assignments may not be accepted.** In professional life, a missed assignment or blown deadline nearly always impacts the efforts of colleagues and/or results in a missed opportunity for the organization. Just as professionals cannot ‘blow-off’ assignments or deadlines, or just ‘not show up’ for assigned duties, interns must act responsibly and promptly when circumstances arise which impair their ability to be on time and meet deadlines. Students must notify BOTH the faculty coordinator and internship supervisor in the case of verifiable extenuating circumstances (i.e., family emergency) in advance of assignment due dates AND about missed scheduled time at the internship. Otherwise, exceptions will not be granted, and late assignments will not be accepted.

### ***Note: All dates for intern assignments for the semester are listed later in this document.***

1. **Academic dishonesty** is a serious offense. The work performed during this course—including the work done during your internship--should be your own, or should be submitted with appropriate credit or citation. Academic dishonesty or cheating will be dealt with in accordance with university guidelines. Academic dishonesty may result in a grade of F in this class and reported to the university. In short, don’t do it. It’s not worth it. Interns with questions about ‘appropriate credit or citation’ should ask their internship supervisor or the internship coordinator for clarification in advance of completing/submitting the assignment.

**Any planned absence or unavailability** should be discussed with the internship supervisor not later than the first week of the internship. DO NOT assume that your internship supervisor is familiar with the Illinois State University semester schedule. NOTE: This discussion should include Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 18-28).

**Issues:** Interns and supervisors should contact the internship coordinator if they encounter problems or issues during the internship. Interns should expect to be challenged professionally and supervisors should understand their roles as mentors, but both should know that the faculty coordinator is available to help when needed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Weeks** | **Dates** | **Activities (***Interns in italic***; Supervisors in bold)** |
| *6* | *Sept. 27* | *Reflective Essay #1* |
| 7 | **Oct. 1** | **Midterm Evaluations Sent to Supervisors** |
| *8* | **Oct. 11** | **Midterm Evaluations Returned by Supervisors** |
| *11* | *Nov. 1* | *Reflective Essay #2* |
| 12 | **Nov. 8** | **Final Evaluation Forms Sent to Supervisors** |
| 15 | **Dec. 6** | **Final Evaluations Returned from Supervisors** |
| -- | **Dec. 11** | ***Final Grades Recorded & Reported*** |

**Commitment:** Interns and supervisors should know that the School of Communication at Illinois State University respects the value of their commitment to each other and to the student’s opportunity. Supervisors are expected to uphold the commitment to providing meaningful opportunities to the student from the first day of the internship to the last. Interns should understand that they are expected to fulfill their commitments to their organization and supervisor. ***Interns who leave voluntarily or are dismissed by their internship prior to completion of the internship are subject to a grade of “F” for the term no matter what the previous graded material might indicate.***

**Accommodations:** *Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 309.438.5853 or visit studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu*

**Important Dates:**

