

**Psychology 460 Internship**  
**Professor Bette Ackerman**  
**Fall, 1998**

Office: 117 Clough  
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**Meetings & Deadlines**

- Aug. 26: First meeting. We will go over the course requirements and expectations. Students will be told how they will be graded, the purpose of the journal, what types of entries should be made, and given a list of questions they should address in their journals.
- Sept. 2: Short/Brief Class (one hour?). Students should be prepared to give a brief summary to the class on where they will be interning, and a summary of what their experience has been to date. There are some typical problems or confusions that come about from entering a new job or a group. Come prepared to talk about any concerns you may have about your internship placement...lack of adequate direction, personal interaction questions or problems....whatever your concern might be.
- Deadline** for 1) completed contract with all signatures, approved by Dr. Ackerman before your site-supervisor signs, 2) signed waiver, and 3) pledged completion of APA ethical guidelines. Any student not completing these items may be dropped from the course.
- Sept. 9: Each student should come prepared to summarize his or her internship placement. In addition to whatever else you want to tell us, you should provide :
- 1) an explanation of the company or agency (how funded, who owns it, division/department, chief missions, etc.)
  - 2) what you believe you will be doing and what you hope you will learn/get from this experience, and
  - 3) an explanation of how the academic discipline of psychology may be related.
- Sept. 23: What are supervisors and co-workers looking for in interns?  
We will talk about the common problems students have during internships. Think about what supervisors want from an intern, and the type of impression you want to make. We will need to discuss confidentiality and ethical considerations as an integral part of professional behavior. More generally, we will talk about self-presentations, and will discuss the difference in self-presentations which might be appropriate when you are applying for graduate school versus jobs. Finally I will quickly discuss cover letters, the difference between a resume' and a vita, and the "care and feeding" of references.
- Oct. 7: I will schedule outside speakers to come and meet with the class. The students will be responsible for selecting the topic (former Rhodes College' graduates speaking about working in the "real" world, or, students in graduate school, etc)
- Oct. 14: No Class. Journal and annotated bibliography are due, as well as a short summary of what your final paper will cover. The journal should include daily entries as well as answers to many of the questions given you on 8/26. Midterm journal grade will be determined from this submission.
- Nov. 11: Students will summarize their long-term career goals as well as their immediate job expectations following graduation & plans for obtaining that position. Copies of an up-to-date resume' (or vita) and a cover letter should be brought to class, one copy for each class member. Students planning on applying to graduate school should provide the same types of material, although theirs should target graduate programs
- Nov. 18: Continuation of above, if needed

**Schedule an exit interview with your supervisor to discuss his or her evaluation of you. An entry in your journal will provide evidence of the meeting taking place, and your sense of how it went.**

- Dec. 2: The class will meet at my house for dinner. Each student will present a summary of his or her internship experience, what was learned, and a short synopsis of how their perspective has changed over the semester (prompted by questions handed out Jan. 14). Students should explain some of the ways in which they found their psychology coursework in to be useful in their work experience.
- Dec. 9: All assignments are due, (daily journal, annotated bibliography, research paper, and 500 word summary) as well as a completed evaluation by your supervisor (found in original course material). It is your responsibility, not your supervisor's, to see that Dr. Ackerman has this evaluation on time. **Dr. Ackerman will be unable to assign a grade unless the evaluation is returned.**

**Highly Suggested Reading:**

Bolles, R.M. What color is your parachute? Berkeley: Ten Speed Press. Revised and updated yearly. Dr. Ackerman has a copy if you want to look it over.

**Journal Grades:**

A -- journal must demonstrate that the student has consistently, throughout the semester, attempted to a) address the list of questions handed out on 1/14, and b) frequently attempted to integrate internship experience with psychology course material. Student is demonstrating intellectual engagement with the material.

B -- journal entries occasionally address points a) and b), above. Sporadic indication of intellectual engagement, or engagement is relatively superficial.

C -- journal entries rarely address points a) and b), above. Little indication of intellectual engagement.

D,F -- failure to address the issues above

**Final Paper Grade:**

A-- student must have demonstrated effort to locate and understand critical primary readings relating to the internship. Consideration is given to number and source of references. Of course, an A-paper is well written, there is development of theme, and provides insight.

B--Student did some review of primary literature, and paper is ok, but not well written or not very deep.

C-- Weak literature review or weak paper.

D-F -- No effort to search literature, or "token" paper.

## **Things to observe in your internship and report in your journal:**

### Relating to Psychology

- In what ways are your studies in psychology applicable to this internship? What did you learn in Developmental, Social, Counseling, etc. which is useful in understanding the site? This is the single most important question for you to address in your journal. You should try to have one entry like this every day you make an entry.
- What did you learn in your psych studies which seems to be contradicted in your internship?
- Have you seen problems at the site which your psychological studies can help clarify? In other words, what do you know which they don't?

### Relating to the Organization Itself

- Were your job responsibilities clearly delineated?
- How were you received by members of the organization?
- Were you made to feel more or less valued than you anticipated?
- Were there any “upending experiences” -- incidents that strongly conflicted with your assumptions about the organization and/or your role?
- What doesn't seem to work well in this organization, what problems are there?
- Identify the good (successful?) versus bad workers in the organization. compare and contrast the behavior, attitudes, image, demeanor, and style of the two groups. What are the differences in the way the two groups are treated by their colleagues?
- Did you experience any of the following problems (or any others not listed below)? If so, describe the problem and how you handled it:
  - a) too much or too little direction;
  - b) difficulty in judging how well you were performing your job, fitting into the organization, and progressing;
  - c) difficulty in dealing with your boss or peers
- Organizational Culture
  - a) What are the group/organizational/agency values? How are these communicated to employees and the public? What are their priorities?
  - b) What are the central beliefs of the organization about how the world works? How does it affect how the work is carried out?
  - c) What are the acceptable behavior patterns for employees? important taboos?
- What are the most important dimensions of performance?
- How are failures handled?
- Which rules can be bent and which cannot be? How rigidly does it operate?
- How much social distance is there between/among individuals on different levels of the hierarchy, or between clients & staff??
- How formal is the setting? How is this reflected?

### **Later Reflections**

- How clear were your expectations about what the organization and the work unit would be like as a place to work prior to beginning your internship?
- Have these expectations been borne out? What ones were? Which were not?
- Which important initial perceptions or assumptions have turned out to be inaccurate?
- Roughly, how long was it before you first felt that you understood who the key players were any how the group/organization really operated?
- How did your relationship with your supervisor evolve over time?

- What aspects of this internship suited your abilities/interests? Failed to suit?
- How have your career interests changed as a function of this internship?