Internship Seminar in Mexico 399

An internship is any carefully monitored work or service experience in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience.
The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE)

Cross Listings and Credit Options

Students may choose to register for credit in any of the following departments:

- Business (BUS)
- Environmental Studies (ENV)
- History (HIS)
- Interdisciplinary Studies (INS)
- Marketing (MKT)
- Political Science (POL)
- Religion (REL)
- Spanish (SPA)*
- Women's Studies (WST)
- Youth and Family Ministries (YFM)

**If you register for Spanish credit, you have to complete all assignments in Spanish.*

If you are seeking credit in another field, please contact us to inquire about the possibilities.

Prerequisite: SPA 212, the equivalent, or the instructors' permission

Coordinators: Antonio Ortega and Lisanne Morgan

NOTE: If you register for this course, you must **submit a completed internship application in which you list your primary learning objectives for the internship, along with your resumé and Spanish Reference form, by June 1 for the fall semester and by December 1 for the spring semester.** The Spanish Reference Form should be completed by a Spanish professor indicating you're your Spanish is strong enough to successfully complete the internship, as well as a brief phone interview in Spanish with a CGE Nicaragua staff member. **Requests for internships will not be processed unless all of the forms are submitted.**

The internship seminar is a rigorous academic course and should be treated as such. If you register for the internship seminar, you must be willing to travel to your internship sites and to work evenings and weekends, when necessary.

Required Readings

Sweitzer. H. Frederick and Mary A. King. *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development*, *3rd edition* (not earlier editions). Brook/Cole, 2013.

Additional articles and/or book chapters, as assigned and as required for research for the final academic paper.

Observation days: 3-4 days that you set up with your agency (when your schedule permits) prior to starting your internship on a regular basis.

Internship days: TBC: most likely Mondays and Wednesdays, unless specified otherwise by your internship site.

Internship seminars: To be announced. Days and times will probably change over the course of the semester.

Course Description

The internship seminar is a rigorous academic course for students who are highly-self motivated. This course involves: 1) approximately 100 hours of work experience and/or participant observation in an organization in Mexico; 2) independent research on a subject that helps you situate your internship within your academic discipline and deepen your learning; and 3) participation in a seminar that explores cultural issues, organizational analysis and personal, academic, and professional development through class discussions, speakers, and written and oral assignments. Through your work and participation in the overall program and seminar sessions, you will have opportunities to improve your Spanish language skills (if applicable), learn about key issues in intercultural communication and working in a different cultural context, develop skills in organizational analysis, articulate your personal, academic, and professional goals, and critically reflect upon the service you are providing to the business or organization where you are completing your internship. **Remember, this is an academic course, and therefore academic credit is earned based on how well you articulate what you learn, not just the amount of hours you work.**

Internships aim to provide you with real-life, meaningful experiences, which by their very nature foster critical thinking. Most likely you will encounter events that conflict with your assumptions. Incidents may arise that challenge your competency or understanding. These experiences may create perplexity or dissonance, but with reflection, they are often the beginning of a great deal of learning.

There are three basic components to an effective internship:

- The first is sufficient preparation. This includes setting objectives for your personal learning as well as setting common goals with your host organization.
- The second component is simply performing service by working closely with your Mexican counterparts to meet both your objectives and their needs and requests. A successful internship largely depends on your ability to take initiative and participate as fully as possible.
- The third part is the continual analysis of your experiences, through discussion, reflection, writing in your journal and oral presentations.

A major aim of the CGE internships is to integrate practical work experience into your academic curriculum. Issues related to the history of Mexico, the political system, poverty and classism, gender, sexuality, and ethnic and racial challenges in the country will most likely emerge throughout your internship. The practical experience provides the structure to synthesize your coursework with reality. It also offers the opportunity to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in a cross-cultural setting.

Internships should be considered independent study.
In this regard, if you choose to apply for an internship, you should be aware that the relative success of your internship as a learning experience is largely in your own hands. Furthermore, you should be aware that the concept of interning is new to Mexico. As such, most organizations with which students are placed do not have significant experience with using short-term interns in their work. Therefore, you must be willing to put effort into making work at your organization meaningful, and, if necessary, be willing to serve as a role model for how interns may be used at these organizations in the future. The most successful interns are mature, proactive, independent, and willing to "stick their necks out" in requesting that their supervisors to include them in activities and recommend to their supervisors suitable work activities. If you are unwilling or unable to accept this responsibility, you should consider enrolling in one of the other academic courses.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will:

1. Gain hands-on work experience by contributing approximately 100 hours of service to a local organization or business that has expressed a need or desire for assistance, alongside local professionals.
2. Describe the role, structure, and function of the agency or business.
3. Increase your knowledge of Spanish vocabulary and written and oral Spanish (if applicable).
4. Make explicit connections between at least two concepts, theories, and/or ideas from the discipline in which you are earning academic credit and your internship placement site.
5. Consciously apply and reflect upon your development or improvement of at least two professional work skills (such as writing, speaking, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, computer technology, intercultural communication, etc.) to the internship site.
6. Assess the accomplishment of your expressed learning goals related to the internship, as well as your contributions to the agency or business where you work.
7. Complete a final research paper in which you analyze an important subject related to the academic discipline in which you are earning credit for this course and to the work of the internship site.

Course Requirements

1. **Course Participation and On Site Performance (20%):** Participation includes successful completion of approximately 100 hours of constructive involvement in the work site, as well as active participation in the internship seminar. Active involvement includes completion of a cover letter to the internship site, the signed learning agreement, time sheets, and the assigned readings, as well as bringing completed journal or blog entries to class, completing supervisory sessions with the on-site supervisor and the instructor, and a final evaluation at the site. You will be evaluated by your site supervisor at the end of the semester based on your overall performance, including your presence at the site, the activities accomplished, interaction with clients, students, and/or other staff. Deadlines:
   - Cover letter to the internship site.
   - Signed learning agreement. See the Sweitzer and King book and separate handout about writing an effective learning agreement. *Please note that you will not be able to pass the internship course if you do not complete a learning agreement on time.* Due date of draft: TBA. Final due date for signed agreement: TBA.
   - First set of time sheets: Due date: TBA (1/3 way through).
   - Second set of time sheets: Due date: TBA (2/3 way through).

2. **Internship Site Journal or Blog (10%):** After each time you go to your internship site, write a short journal entry about what you learned that day and what questions you have as a result of your experiences. See the separate handout for a detailed description of expectations regarding your internship site journal or blog, as well as ideas for journal or blog entries. Since you will write in your journal or blog after every time that you go to your site, you will be expected to have a total of at least 12 journal or blog entries. You will be expected to give the instructors your blog link to be checked periodically. If you complete a written journal, you need to bring it to class every session because you will be asked to turn it in at unannounced times throughout the semester.

3. **Organizational Analysis Map and Mini-Oral Presentation (10%):** After reading Chapter 8, "Getting to Know your Placement Site," apply your best participant observation skills to your internship site, carefully observing all of the physical spaces at the site, who is in each space, what the objective of each space is, and how what is done in each space contributes to the overall mission, goals, and objectives of the organization or business. You may supplement what you see with reading materials, such as brochures about the business or organization and its website, if applicable. However, the primary objective is for you to observe and map what you see in such a way that you can then present your map and initial analysis to the other students in the internship seminar. Additional information will be provided in a separate handout. You will present your map in a short 10-15 minute presentation in class.

4. **Short Reflection and Analysis Papers (40%):** You will be asked to write four 2-3-page typed papers about each of the topics listed below. Each paper is worth 10% of the grade and should be typed in 12" Arial font or another similar font, and margins should be 1". The papers will always be due before class in order to serve as a basis for discussion in the seminar. Please email completed papers to Antonio Ortega at ortega@augsburg.edu and Lisanne Morgan lisanne@laneta.apc.org The topics of each paper are listed below.
   - Academic Connections Paper: Describe the academic connections that you are making between your internship site and the discipline in which you are receiving credit for this course. Review your internship application to see which two concepts, theories, and/or ideas from your discipline you initially thought might relate to your internship. Then assess whether or not they apply, and if so, in what ways they do. If those concepts do not apply, what other concepts, theories, and/or ideas might help you maximize learning from the internship? You may include a list of preliminary academic questions that you could pursue further in your final academic research paper.
   - Intercultural Communication and Cultural Issues: Discuss one or two key concepts in intercultural communication that you have been learning about as a result of your internship experiences thus far. What you have learned about your own cultural values, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors? What have you learned about the culture(s) of your colleagues and/or clients? Have you experienced any cultural clashes or discomfort? If so, describe what happened and what you did to cope with the situation in a constructive manner. Feel free to write this paper in the form of a "Critical Incident" paper. See the Sweitzer and King book and other handouts for details about critical incidents.
   - Power, Privilege and Positionality: After completing required readings for this week and reviewing related readings you read earlier in the semester, reflect on what you have observed regarding issues of power, privilege and positionality related to race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and/or religion at you internship site. For example, look at power dynamics and examine who is in leadership positions and who isn't. Are there any common characteristics of those at your site, and if so, how do they interact? What have you observed in the participation and/or treatment of employees or "clients" (if applicable)? Are there certain assumptions, teachings, and/or language used at your site? How do your colleagues and/or supervisor identify with regards to socio-economic class and race or ethnicity, and how might the work be different if you were working with people from a different class and/or race/ethnicity? How does your own identity play into the site atmosphere? If you were doing the same internship in the U.S, how might it be different in terms of race/ethnicity, class and/or gender, etc.?
   - Final Reflection on Learning Objectives and Learning Agreement: Upon completion of your internship, you will be asked to review your original internship application, all of your journal/blog entries, class notes, and short papers, and then synthesize what you learned over the course of your entire internship experience. This paper must include the following: 1) what you learned about yourself through this internship, 2) an analysis of the extent to which you met each specific learning objective written in your learning agreement and the tasks you completed in order to accomplish each objective, as well any challenges you faced in meeting them, 3) the reasons why a particular objective was not accomplished (if applicable), together with an explanation of why and what was accomplished in place of that objective, 4) the ways that you will be able to utilize this experience when re-entering the classroom and/or workplace, and 5) ways in which this internship has solidified and/or changed your career goals.

5. **Research Paper and Oral Presentation Related to Your Academic Discipline (20%**): Since one of the primary purposes of this internship is to develop deeper knowledge of your academic discipline and potential career paths, throughout the course you will be expected to engage in independent research regarding a subject of interest that helps you situate your internship within the academic discipline for which you are earning credit and deepen your knowledge of that subject. As you formulate your research proposal, be sure to review your application essay, the concepts and theories mentioned in your learning agreement, and your first short paper. Then choose a subject that you can investigate in more depth.

Near the end of the semester, you will articulate the findings of that research in an 8-10 page typed paper, along with a 10-15 minute oral presentation for the other students. A few examples of academic papers that connect one's academic discipline to the internship site are as follows:

- A Women's Studies or History major: Internship at a women's organization: A research paper on feminicide, domestic violence, and/or reproductive rights in Mexico that provides a history of the topic and discusses how the particular organization has participated in local, national, and/or international struggles on this issue. A Political Science major at this internship site would probably focus on public policy debates, and if s/he is an International Relations major, s/he may explore international agreements regarding the issue and/or a comparison of public policies regarding the issue in the U.S. and Mexico.
- A Political Science major working at a school: A research paper on the politics of education and educational policies in Mexico. Questions to consider: How does Mexican educational policy compare with U.S. educational policy? What changes have occurred in Mexican educational policies over the past fifty years, and why?
- A History major working in a human rights organization: A research paper on the history of human rights struggles in Mexico and the history of the internship organization within the broader context of Mexican history. What have been the trends in human rights abuses in Mexico over the past fifty years? (Have certain groups been targeted more than others during different historical periods?) What do historians see as some of the gains in human rights legislation in Mexico and/or internationally that impact the organization where you work?
  Proposal due date: TBA. Final Paper and Oral Presentation: Last week of semester.

Internship Seminar: Ideas for Journal or Blog Entries

You are expected to complete a short journal/blog entry after every time that you go to your internship site, and your entries will be read periodically. **While you are not required to answer all of these questions in your entries, you are highly encouraged to use them as prompts for your journaling or blogging, especially during the first 3-4 weeks.** Be sure to read all of these questions before you begin journaling/blogging, and when you are not sure what to write about, read these ideas again.

BEFORE your first internship site visit: (*We recommend writing this in Spanish even if you are not taking the course for Spanish credit.*) What are your interests specifically in this organization (what would you ideally like to do- ***specific interests rather than tasks*** (e.g.) working with teenagers and sports, a specific topic in human rights, projects with kids. Jot down some of the experience that you have had in the past that might relate to the organization-anecdotes, ideas of projects that you envision. Also jot down questions you would like to ask the interviewer. What you expect to happen in the interview (your expectations). *This is really helpful for you to envision what will happen and to be prepared for your meeting, especially to have some questions ready because inevitably they will ask you what questions you have.*

There are a few logistical questions you will need to ask so include these in Spanish:

1. what bus(es) pass by the site
2. what time you will need to start and generally finish at the site
3. what is a normal day like etc. (if appropriate)

Bring this with you to the interview! We will talk about this on the way to your site.

After the meeting (in English if you prefer, unless taking for Spanish credit)—What happened, what were your initial reactions, gut feelings, what was your assessment of the meeting/organization? What was different from your expectations, and why do you think it was different?

Unstructured journaling: After reading chapter 1 of *The Successful Internship*, pick one of the methods they suggest about unstructured journal writing (on page 11-16) to journal about your internship experience this week. Try to experiment with one that you may have not used before. Write about your observations: what has called your attention during these first days, what cultural aspects have you noticed, what unwritten things have you seen and anything else you consider relevant.

Free write: Free writes "should record what you did and saw that day, new ideas and concepts you were exposed to and how you can use them, and your personal thoughts and feelings about what is happening to you. It may be helpful to divide what you learn at an internship into four categories: a) knowledge, b) skills, c) personal growth, and d) career development."

Specific Topics to Consider Writing About:

- Spanish vocabulary – what new words or new word usage did you learn today?
- Academic Connections – what connections did you make to the academic discipline in which you are earning credit?
- Skills Development: What new skills did you learn or improve upon today?
- Critical Incidents: See Sweitzer and King book for ideas.
- Ethical issues: Did any ethical concerns arise in your work site today? If so, describe the ethical dilemmas and whether or not they may be cultural rather than ethical.
- Cultural Issues: What did you learn about your own cultural values, assumptions, and behaviors today? What did you learn about the cultural values, assumptions, and behaviors of your colleagues and/or others at your site?
- Race, Class, Gender, Age, Religion, Sexuality, etc.: What did you observe?
- Power and Privilege: What issues emerged today?
- Questions that Emerge: What new questions do you have to discuss in your internship seminar?

Internships are available in the following areas:

- Arts (Visual Arts, Dance and Theatre): Students use their creativity and artistic gifts at a local school, community organization or business. Theatre majors have used their talents on the stage to transform a high school English class into an interactive class. Another student majoring in art painted postcards for a human rights organization and were later sold during a fundraiser.
- Business and Marketing: Students can intern with a local, national or multinational company where they will have direct interaction with the daily operations of the organization. Placements include tourism, marketing and advertising, microfinance, distribution, import/export, and other business related fields. Since Cuernavaca is home to many international manufacturing and production plants such as Nissan, Ponds, Bridgestone/Firestone as well as small companies such as Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting, ICSA Associates and Acierto Global Publicity Firm, you can choose the area that best fits your needs. Past students have researched clients at a local microfinance company in order to better frame products to current and future clients; other interns researched NAFTA business regulations for an international company.
- Community Development and Organizing: Students learn first-hand while working on community issues such as the preservation of indigenous culture and practices, human rights in Mexico, environmental conservation, AIDS education, gender and sexuality and local land and community struggles. A past student learned about a village's concept of community organizing while working on their yearly festival. Another student participated in local environmental actions (cultural events, protests, email campaigns) to prevent a trash dump from being built in Cuernavaca.
- Education: Students assist in a variety of educational settings teaching or tutoring English, Math, History, Religion. Work with at-risk children through workshops and one-on-one interactions with children in orphanages or group homes.

- Health Care: Internships are available in the health field in areas such as alternative medicine, nursing, midwifery, elder or child care, social work or chaplaincy. Past interns have worked at a women's health clinic conducting workshops, teaching yoga and participating with the daily operations of the clinic. Others have worked in orphanages and adolescent group homes, homes for elderly adults, large hospitals and small natural medicine clinics.
- Public Policy and Advocacy: Students have the opportunity to collaborate with Mexican organizations around issues of human rights, indigenous issues, environment, AIDS and health education, sexual and reproductive rights, gender and sexuality, elderly and children. Participate in local and national projects, on-going research and local community events. Students have participated in AIDS education campaigns, conducted interviews with past immigrants to the US and Canada, experimented with cost-effective grey-water filters and documented human rights violations with an independent human rights commission.
- Social Work and Social Services: Students work directly with clients in a group home, an orphanage or elderly center or accompany a social worker at a local service agency. Students have created and implemented activities with elderly adults as well as worked one-on-one with at risk teenagers. Others have staffed booths and distributed educational materials at local conferences.
- Youth and Family Ministries: Students are able to put ministry into practice while interning at a local church, faith-based organization or religious school. Some students have taught classes in ethics and religion at a local Catholic high school, while others have translated English letters from Christian sponsors in the US for a local women's center in Cuernavaca. One student participated in a Catholic women's group which offers classes on nutrition and sewing.

Additional Comments

Explanation of Grades

Augsburg College uses a numerical grading system using the following definitions:

Number	Letter Equivalent	Percentage	Augsburg Definition
4.0	A	93-100%	Achieves highest standards of excellence
3.5	A-/B+	88-92%	
3.0	B	83-87%	Achieves above basic course standards
2.5	B-/C+	78-82%	
2.0	C	73-77%	Meets basic standards for the course
1.5	C-/D+	68-72%	
1.0	D	63-67%	Performance below basic course standards
0.5	D-	60-62%	
0.0	F	Under 60%	Unacceptable performance (no credit for the course)

A "Pass" grade is 2.0 or above.

Grading Policy and Late Assignments

You must submit assignments on time. If you need an extension, you must talk to us **in advance** to negotiate a new deadline. If you have not been given an extension in advance and you turn in a late assignment, you will be docked half a grade (from a 4.0 to a 3.5 or 3.5 to a 3.0, 3.0 to a 2.5, 2.5 to a 2.0, etc.) If you are more than one week late, you will be docked a full grade. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original deadline; a "0" will be given after that. Assignments due near the end of the semester will not be accepted after the last day of the semester.

Augsburg Honesty Policy
You are expected to follow the Augsburg Honesty Policy which is printed in the program manual. We assume that you have read the honesty policy, understand it, and are following it. Except when the assignment expressly encourages group work, it is assumed that all course work will be your own. You may not copy other students' work. The first occurrence of plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. A student who commits plagiarism a second time will fail the course.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities
Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. Those who qualify should identify themselves to the instructor as soon as possible in order to obtain extra assistance.