Animal Studies M.A. Internship

Description and Purpose

The Animal Studies Internship (ANST-GA 2800.001) will prepare students for their professional lives by providing them with experience in animal-related organizations such as non-profits, research institutes and governmental organizations. At the beginning of the internship, students, the Instructor and Site Supervisor will agree to a learning contract that establishes specific goals as well as a schedule for achieving them. Interns will meet with the Instructor during the semester to discuss their experiences.

One of the primary purposes of the internship is to enhance your integrative skills. You will be exposed to new kinds of material and learning and will learn to integrate understanding from across disciplines and between theory and practice. This means that you are expected to perform different work than in a traditional class. The internship is fundamentally different than other graduate learning experiences in that it is more experiential, professional and applied. Experiential education is most productive when it is combined with reflective practice. To this end, we require continuous journal entries, and reflective papers for the midterm and final. The learning goals include improved analysis, professionalism, problem-solving skills, as well as basic skills.

At the end of the internship, we hope that you will have: improved your ability to synthesize and integrate material from a range of disciplines; deployed diverse methodologies and vocabularies in an applied context; brought theoretical knowledge and skills to bear on practical problems; worked in teams; and communicated with a variety of audiences. Internships are designed to foster the self-initiation, professionalism, and integration that will be indispensable in the professional world. Please set up your internship to optimize this preparation, and share your reflections on this learning process in your journals, midterms and finals.

Learning Contract

The learning contract should include the following, totaling a minimum of 3 pages, 1.5-spaced, Times New Roman:

1. Name and email address for yourself, the Instructor, and the Site Supervisor.
2. Start and end dates.
3. Indicate the point value of your internship course for your AS MA degree (2 points = 80 hours of work plus 10 pages of writing; 4 points = 160 hours of work plus 20 pages of writing).
4. The nature and detail of the internship, including projects, tasks and skills.
5. Intended learning goals, including at least 1 professional and 1 academic SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) goal.
6. At least two analytical questions about your internship.
7. How the internship relates to your course of study.

The purpose of the learning contract is to (1) foster reflection on experiential learning, to optimize the learning experience, (2) serve as a contract should the internship change form, and (3) serve as an assessment tool. The learning contract should be approved by your Instructor and Site Supervisor before starting the internship. Please send your Instructor an electronic copy when it is approved. It can be revised one time as your responsibilities and goals develop (by the midterm meeting at the latest). Since feedback from your site to your Instructor is not shared with you, please solicit qualitative feedback from your Site Supervisor throughout the semester.

Registration

You must also register your internship with the Wasserman Center. You can do that by taking the following steps:
• Log in to NYU CareerNet with your username and password, or register for a new account at https://nyu-csm.symplicity.com/students/.
• Click your cursor on “My Account” and select “Career Outcomes.” If you are unable to select “Career Outcomes,” please contact the Wasserman Center in order activate this resource.
• Select “Add New.” Please note that the “Add New” button will only be visible if you already have profile content included under the “Personal” and “Academic” tabs.
• Fill out the required information regarding your placement and select “Submit.”
Assignments

Readings: Please read the articles and chapters before writing your midterm and finals, and incorporate any insights from those readings into your verbal and written reflections on the internship experience. For Fall 2019, the readings include: excerpts from John Dewey, Experience and Education (from Cahn, ed., Philosophy of Education The Essential Texts), Ken Bain “Learning How to Embrace Failure” and “Messy Problems,” Bill Freudenberg, “Double Diversion,” Saylan and Blumstein, “Between Awareness and Action,” and Juliette McDonald, “Making the Most of Your Internship or Co-op Work Experience.” Additionally, you will be required to find and use at least six peer-reviewed sources to complete your analysis.

Journals: You will write a 1-page reflective journal entry every other week. The purpose is to structure the reflective process, so journals can be in draft form. Consolidate them as one document along with your final paper and email it to your Instructor at the end of the semester. Please describe your professional and personal development. Include new knowledge, values, and interests as well as communication, interpersonal, organizational and other skills. Include perceived strengths and weaknesses of your performance. This is read only by your Instructor.

Meetings: You will meet with your Instructor every other week to discuss your progress in the Internship. Your conversation in each meeting will focus on your previous journal entry. Additionally, your earlier meetings will focus on lessons learned for the remainder of your internship, and your later meetings will focus on lessons learned for your professional development in general. Your grade for these meetings will depend on your attendance and sincere attempt to connect theory with practice.

Midterm Paper: The midterm paper is a reflection on (1) your progress on one academic goal from your learning contract, (2) your progress on one professional goal from your learning contract, (3) your goals for the second half of the semester, and (4) a response to one analytical question, developed over at least 2 pages and including references. Please number the paper, and avoid introductions and conclusions. Midterms, which should follow the numbers above, are due on [date].

Final Paper: The final paper is a reflection on (1) the skills and insights you acquired in (1a) integration, (1b) self-initiation, (1c) professionalism and (1d) application; (2) two analytical questions from your learning contract; (3) three referenced links to content from your AS classes; (4) how you can work more effectively, (5) how animal groups can work more effectively; and (6) how the internship has informed your post-graduation plans. Finals, which should follow the numbers above, are due on [date].

The length of your midterm and final papers will depend on the point value of your internship course. 2 points = 5 pages each, 4 points = 10 pages each.

Analytical Questions (examples): How is your group structured? What scale does it work at? How does it conceive of environmental change? What assumptions, strengths and weaknesses does this have? How do they approach, frame, communicate and solve problems? What are their beliefs and values regarding humans, nonhumans, and the environment? How is your group financed/supported? How does that impact the pursuit of its mission and staffing? What is their relationship with the community? How is performance assessed (is it)?

Assessment: The learning contract and writing assignments are designed to foster reflective analysis on your experiential learning. This includes integrating the experience into your academic studies (by comparing it to your classroom-based understanding of animals), applying your academic studies to the applied problem, and advancing your understanding of interdisciplinary subject matter. These insights, including specific references to the reading, should be integrated into your assignments.

Assessment: Your grade is constituted by: timely placement (10%), learning contract (15%), meetings with your Instructor (20%), written midterm (20%), written final (20%), and journals (15%). Sites give your Instructor descriptive feedback of student performance relative to your learning contract which, per GSAS guidelines, cannot be graded, but which will inform your written work. Late assignments are penalized by one grade (.3 points) per day late. Assignments should reach the required length and be handed in on time. Since these are brief assignments, it is
important that they are excellent, complete and reflective. Please remain in contact with your Site Supervisor to solicit feedback on your performance relative to your learning contract, especially around midterms.

Methods of Evaluation: Please note that a grade of "A" is for exceptional work that not only meets, but exceeds, the expectations of your NYU and supervisors. This is not an easy class! The internship is a hybrid professional-academic course, so is assessed somewhat differently than normal class. We have very high expectations of AS MA students, and assess you accordingly.

Plagiarism and Academic Support: Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to your academic dean. It includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes and references; not citing a source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; or inadvertently copying verbatim from any source. More detail can be found at cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html. NYU offers academic support and tutoring at the ULC (nyu.edu/cas/ulc; 212-998-8085).

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center (212-998-4980; 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor; www.nyu.edu/csd).