



# Communications and Media Studies

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## FALL 2011 SYLLABUS EXP 99CF INTERNSHIP IN COMMUNICATIONS

Your internship will enable you to learn about the world of communications through hands-on experience in broadcasting, film production, print journalism, public relations, marketing communications, advertising, publishing, web and multimedia, social media, and other fields. You will learn how media organizations operate and how various forms of information are transmitted to the public. You may have an opportunity to develop technical skills such as news and sports writing, copywriting, editing, layout, web design, social media, and audio and video production. You will see first-hand how media professionals handle crisis situations as well as their normal daily routine. You may learn that you "have what it takes" for success in a particular field, or you may learn that you don't really want to pursue the career that you thought you did. You will certainly learn things that you could never learn in a classroom.

This course is available to seniors, juniors, and sophomores, not to first-year students. You do not have to be a CMS minor to enroll. All communications internships are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

*Important: You must be enrolled in EXP 99CF **BEFORE** you start your internship.*

You must have an internship lined up and approved by the instructor before you will be allowed to enroll. Completing the paperwork takes time and requires that your site supervisor submit information, so please plan ahead. To receive consent to register, you must submit to Susan Eisenhauer (in person or by fax) a completed *Internship Agreement* form signed by you and by your supervisor at the internship site. Copies of the *Internship Agreement* form and the *Guidelines for Internships* form can be downloaded from the CMS website (<http://ase.tufts.edu/cms>) or obtained from the CMS "library" on the second floor of 95 Talbot Ave. No registration can take place until all parties complete the *Internship Agreement*.

Once consent is granted, you will be cleared to register through SIS. If you receive consent for an internship after September 20, consult with the instructor about how to enroll.

NOTE: For activities directly related to the internship, Tufts covers students in EXP 99CF with professional and general liability insurance coverage while working at the internship site. This insurance coverage extends for the period of the course, from the first day to the last day of the semester, provided the

student is registered. Be aware that Tufts does not provide students with insurance coverage for duties performed while driving a car or other vehicle during the internship. If students use their own vehicles for internship business, they would be covered by their personal insurance. If students plan to use a company's vehicle during the internship, they should check with the company as to insurance coverage.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

**(1) Hours at the site** -- You must work a total of at least 150 hours under the supervision of a specific media professional. (This is approximately 12-16 hours per week throughout the semester; the number of hours per week depends on what week you start and what your site's requirements are. Even if you reach 150 hours "early," you are expected to intern until the end of classes – December 12.). You should meet with the site supervisor on a regular basis. This supervisor will be asked to write an evaluation of your performance at the end of your internship, and will be asked to verify the number of hours you have worked. (You will also be asked to write an evaluation of the organization at the end of the internship, for use by future Tufts students.)

*Note: If you need to miss any of your scheduled work days, it is up to you to notify your supervisor and discuss with him/her how to reschedule the hours. Be sure to discuss far in advance what will happen on holidays (Oct. 11-Columbus Day and Nov. 11-Veteran's Day) and Thanksgiving vacation. Also, Tuesday, November 8 is a Friday class schedule at Tufts, so work out in advance how you will handle any internship hours you normally would work on that day.*

**2) Staying informed** --There is no required text for this course, but you are expected to be well-informed on issues (international, national, and local) that might affect your work. If you do not already keep up with the news, this is a great time to start. You also are expected to be familiar with the work produced by the communications outlet for which you are interning.

**3) Photo of you at work** -- Sometime during the semester, please email to me at least one excellent, high quality (taken with a camera, not your phone, please) photo of you at work at your internship, as well as a caption that describes what you're doing. We hope to use it on the CMS website or in our next newsletter. It's best to show yourself being busy at work, not posing, ideally in the field and/or doing something interesting. If you use equipment in your internship (e.g. TV newsroom, radio studio) or can show some "props" to define where you work, all the better, but I don't want it to look posed. Thanks in advance for sending me a great photo!

**4) One-on-one meetings with Susan E.** -- You must meet with me individually at least four times during the semester to review your internship experience. These meetings will take place in my office and will last about 20 minutes. Please be prompt. Generally, we will meet a day or two after you turn in each paper (see below). Contact me as soon as possible at the start of the semester, to arrange the dates and times for the papers and meetings. Write the dates on your calendar!

### **5) Writing Requirement --**

**(A) Weekly emails** – Once a week (Friday, Saturday, or Sunday – your choice), send a short email to Susan Eisenhauer ([susan.eisenhauer@tufts.edu](mailto:susan.eisenhauer@tufts.edu)). Information to include: (1) **a log of your hours** for the week (list each date that you interned, the number of hours on each date, and a running total for the internship so far); (2) **a brief description** of your duties that week; (3) **a short description** of any problems (if any) or successes (if any) that you are having at the internship...anything you'd like to share with me. This is your chance to alert me to any immediate concerns and to praise, complain, seek advice, and/or ask questions. Note: This email does not need to be long. Just cover the basics. If you want/need to discuss your concerns

in person, just let me know and we will arrange it.

**(B) Four Short Papers -- Please give me hard copies.** The papers will help you reflect upon your specific work, the work of your organization, and issues affecting the media in general. You will submit one paper approximately every three weeks, with a hard copy to be handed in **at least 24 hours before your meeting time with me (note: if you are meeting with me on a Monday, turn the paper in by 4:00 on the previous Friday)**. You can hand it to me in my office (second floor, 95 Talbot Ave.) or turn it in to my mailbox in the ExCollege office (first floor, same address). It is essential that I read your paper **before** we meet (so we don't waste precious meeting time reciting "the basics," and so I can return the paper to you with comments), so **DO NOT** simply bring the paper with you to our meeting.

The length of your papers may vary, but they should be about four typed, double-spaced pages. Given the importance of clear and concise writing in the communications field, **please take extra care in composing and proofreading your papers.**

In general, I believe students benefit greatly from keeping a day-to-day "diary" of their internship experiences. I encourage you to keep such a diary, but the papers I would like you to submit to me should be less of a day-to-day recitation of your internship duties and more of a reflection on what you've been doing, observing, and thinking about the experience.

#### **PAPER TOPICS:**

\*\*\* PLAN AHEAD, BECAUSE SOME OF THESE REQUIRE RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS AT THE INTERNSHIP SITE \*\*\*

##### **(1) PAPER #1**

Please address **BOTH PARTS (A and B)** of the following:

(A) Tell me about the specific **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES** you have set for the semester. Give me a bulleted list. (You **MUST** meet with your site supervisor to develop the list, so plan ahead so you have plenty of time to do this. State in your paper the name of the person with whom you reviewed the list. Note: Also see Part B of the assignment – below – which involves interviewing the site supervisor.) You should look back on these **GOALS** every week, to see if you are making progress toward meeting them. If you are not making progress, we should talk about ways to approach the situation. Don't be shy about seeking my advice! Tell me, too, about your first impressions of your internship. Some suggested topics follow. What were your expectations as you walked in the door, and is the internship meeting those expectations so far? Do you have specific concerns? Tell me about the internship site, especially the atmosphere and the people who work there. Are there spoken or unspoken social rules, dress codes, and the like? Discuss interpersonal dynamics and "office politics." Consider issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, if relevant. What skills do the professionals at this organization need, to do their jobs? How do this organization and your "niche" in it compare to your previous internships or work experiences, if any?

- AND -

(B) Interview your site supervisor or another professional with whom you work (and, if you have time and opportunity, one other professional at the internship site, preferably higher up or in a different department). Tell me generally (in a narrative style -- not a transcript of your interview) about their educational and work

backgrounds, their job responsibilities, and their views on the field/industry they're working in. How did they get into the field? What type of advice do they have for how you can make the most of your internship, in terms of both expanding your knowledge and networking with other communications professionals? What career advice do they have to offer? The goal here is for you to reach out and start to network at the site. (Note: If you would like to write up the interview as a newspaper article instead of an essay, I encourage that.)

## (2) PAPER #2

*Note - - To write this paper, you must plan ahead. It requires that you (1) talk to at least one or two professionals at your internship site to gather information and specific comments (please tell me the names and titles of the people you interviewed and include quotes from your interviews. I want these interviews to be done one-on-one, not done with a group of interns or as part of a seminar with other workers), and (2) do research on this business organization in the library, in trade journals and other publications, on the Internet, and at the internship site itself. Please do not rely solely on the organization's website for information! Remember - (1) Do not simply "lift" material from the company website or marketing materials, (2) do supply sources for your research, and (3) INCLUDE QUOTES AND COMMENTS FROM THE PROFESSIONALS YOU INTERVIEW.*

*Please contact me if you are having trouble with how to approach the topic, and we can talk it through.*

Write in detail about your internship site as a business and how it fits into the specific media industry of which it is a part (e.g. television, advertising, newspapers, etc.). What are the site's overall objectives? What are its main competitors? Is it a successful company and how is success measured? What outside forces influence its bottom line (e.g. government funding cutbacks, economic recession, new competitors)? Are there local, national, or international events that have affected, or will affect, your organization? You should write about the products of the internship organization, be they books, magazines, newspapers, films, public relations or advertising "campaigns" for specific clients, TV or radio news shows, etc. How are the products funded? What are the audiences for these products? To what extent are the products influenced by the financial side of the company (e.g. are the formats and anchors of news shows changed to improve ratings and advertising rates?). Do you like the products? Why, or why not? How would you improve them, if you had the opportunity? Do these products help the organization reach its goals (financial, political, ethical, etc.)?

## (3) PAPER #3

Again, plan ahead! Choose **ONE** of the following topics.

(A) If you are in an internship for which you have done some substantive writing, photography, design, film, or other creative work, submit that to me with a 3-page written discussion of what the sample is, how the project came about (was it assigned or did you push for it?), what research you did for it, what skills you might have enhanced by taking on the project, what feedback you had from your supervisor about the quality of the work, and where this project might lead you to next.

(B) Interview at least two other professionals at the internship site (the higher-up the better, and in two different departments). In narrative form -- or as newspaper article(s), if you would prefer it -- tell me generally about their educational and work backgrounds, their job responsibilities, and their views on the field/industry in which they're working. Include quotes from your interviewees. How did they get into the field? What type of advice do they have for how you can make the most of your internship, in terms of both expanding your knowledge and networking with other communications professionals? What career advice do they have to offer?

(C) Discuss an internship-related topic of your choice. I encourage you to choose this option...be creative! (Note: you must discuss and clear the topic with me in advance.) What follows is one possibility, though I'm open to lots of topics (again, you would need to clear the gist of it with me in advance) -- Describe a situation at the internship that called for an "ethical decision" -- something you were directly involved in or something you observed. Analyze this situation. How would you have handled it, and why? Or, describe a specific situation from which you learned something about yourself in terms of effective interpersonal communications. Discuss a mistake you've made, almost made, or fear making. Why is it significant, and how can you correct it or avoid it?

#### **(4) PAPER #4**

Please address **BOTH A and B** of the following:

(A) Write an in-depth overview and evaluation of your internship experience. **Have you met the goals you set out for yourself at the beginning of the internship? (Refer back to the list you made for paper #1 and be specific in answering this.)** What have you gained academically, professionally, and personally? What have you learned about yourself and your interpersonal skills? Discuss the relationship between your liberal arts education and your internship experience. Are there specific courses you've taken that have been especially helpful? Are there courses you wish you had taken, or now plan to take? How has your internship experience affected your career plans? Are you interested in working in the field/industry in which you are interning? If not, why not? If so, what sector of the field appeals to you most? How difficult is it to obtain entry-level employment in this area, and how should you go about networking and looking for a position? Is graduate work necessary for a career in this field?

- AND -

(B) Learn how to "market" yourself in the best possible way as a potential employee. Review the "resume packet" on the Career Services website (there are good samples and a list of action verbs to use in your bullets). Rewrite/update your resume and ask your supervisor and others at the internship site for feedback. Tell me in the paper what advice/comments you received. Attach the new resume to your final paper, so I can review it in advance of our final meeting. When you show the resume to professionals at the internship site, be sure to get their advice on how best to word the description of your current internship, which should now be at the top of the "Experience" list. Talk to them about what "gaps" there are in your resume (e.g. additional skills or experience that you need), and how you could go about filling them.

**Important: Please remember that in order to receive a "Pass" for academic credit in this course, you must fulfill all of the above requirements. In addition to working the hours at your internship site, you must submit the papers on time (not all at the end of the internship). If you encounter any problems meeting these requirements, please contact me immediately -- do not wait until the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with me.**