Internship in Panama

COURSE DESIGNATOR: same number for all  
NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3  
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English  
CONTACT HOURS: 38

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Bocas del Toro internship course provides students with the opportunity to acquire work experience in a field related to academic or professional interests while becoming familiar with the country and culture of Panama. Through practical internship experiences as well as readings, discussions, and written assignments, students will become knowledgeable about the local culture, organizational cultures and succeeding in a professional environment.

In addition to gaining a cross-cultural comparative view on work, course topics and assignments allow students to critically examine their own worldviews, deepen insights about themselves, and acquire habits and skills that allow them to be successful in the workplace. Course themes include intercultural communication and intercultural competence, international development and sustainability, power and privilege. It is expected that students will make valuable contributions to the internship site through the completion of major projects or tasks.

INSTRUCTOR

Mary Brakke, PhD  
Assistant Teaching Professor  
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course students will:

- Be skillful in reflecting on experience to gain insights that contribute to personal and professional growth
- Be able to articulate personal skills, strengths and values within the context of the work environment
- Understand how different values and communication styles may impact workplace dynamics and develop strategies to manage these differences
- Be aware of best practices regarding professional behavior within a work environment
- Able to analyze the social context of the workplace site and its influence on language, intercultural norms and values, and economic and cultural assumptions
- Appreciate issues of social justice and the operation of power and privilege within different sectors of society
METHODOLOGY

This is a discussion-based class with some lecture components by the instructor and guest speakers. Students will engage in readings, reflection and debriefings, interviews with locals and organizational partners to broaden their understanding and learning.

READING MATERIALS

Reflective Practice


Cultural Competence

Chun & Evans. (2016). Deconstructing Cultural Competence

Deardorff, D. Theory reflections: Intercultural competence framework/model.


Panama - Geography, Ecology and Land Use Perspectives


Land Rights Now – Plea to recognize land rights of the Naso [https://www.landrightsnow.org/this-place-is-our-life-we-would-never-destroy-it/](https://www.landrightsnow.org/this-place-is-our-life-we-would-never-destroy-it/) Accessed 5/10/2019

Tenure Facility. [A visual history of indigenous peoples land rights](https://www.landrightsnow.org/this-place-is-our-life-we-would-never-destroy-it/). Accessed 5/10/2019

Tenure Facility.
Panama - Economic, Political, Cultural Perspectives

Grandmother Water https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAw3ctCjiTc


NPR. (2014). Panama canal divides a country into haves and have nots. June 1, 2014.


Personal and Professional Development


U of MN. Skills Statements
Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95+</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSEWORK AND DETERMINATION OF COURSE GRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of Grade – 3 cr option</th>
<th>% of Grade – 6 cr option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Place – Organization and Community Analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Place – Panama Perspectives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Transcript and Paper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Tour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Supervisor Feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative Research</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Independent Research Process</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Grade</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>
ASSESSMENT DETAIL

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION
Although ultimately rewarding, working in another country can be confusing or frustrating. There will be time in most classes to discuss and debrief your workplace interactions and tasks. You should be ready to share your experiences and thoughtfully comment on other’s experiences. This course requires that you participate in class discussions. This means that you contribute to class discussions by relating your experiences, asking questions, and making comments appropriate to the topics being discussed.

REFLECTION/JOURNAL: ONGOING
Short reflective essays are required as part of your internship learning experience. Weekly reflective papers (2 pages) cover a range of topics including internship activities, cultural observations, intercultural communications, professional development and experiential learning. Reflective essays provide an opportunity to record observations, thoughts and feelings, to analyze experiences from different perspectives and to formulate insights that prepare you for future experiences. Reflective essays will not be shared beyond the instructor unless discussed.

UNDERSTANDING PLACE: ORGANIZATION/COMMUNITY MAP
This activity is an opportunity to collaborate with your classmates to map the organizational and community landscape of Bocas del Toro. Questions to explore include: Who are the stakeholders and communities in Bocas del Toro? How does your organization fit into the larger Bocas del Toro community? What are the strengths/weaknesses and challenges/opportunities of the stakeholders? What are the partnerships? What partnerships are desired? What are the roadblocks? More detailed assignment description will be provided.

UNDERSTANDING PLACE: PANAMA PERSPECTIVES
This activity enables students to gain experience conducting directed research on a selected aspect of life in Panama and communicating it with others. References have previously been identified on key areas of life in Panama (e.g., Geography, Ecology and Land Use; Social and Cultural; Economic and Political). With assistance of the instructor, students will lead a short discussion that examines life in Panama through a critical lens.

INTERVIEW PAPER
Students will interview an individual with professional experiences they are interested exploring. Students create an interview protocol in class. Following the interview, students will write a brief bio of the interviewee and share insights in class. Describe how you found this person, their experience, how the job compares to a similar job in the U.S., and the impact of the interview on your interest in the field.
**INTERNSHIP TOUR FOR COLLEAGUES**
Each student will prepare a tour of their internship site for classmates and instructor. The tour should include a brief summary of the organization and its mission, history, programming initiatives and financial model. Obtaining permission to tour the internship site is the responsibility of students. For sites with more than one student intern, students will coordinate.

**INTERNSHIP PRESENTATION**
At the end of the internship program, you will have an opportunity to share your internship experience. The presentation should include your learning and professional objectives. Each student will share a critical incident or event from the experience and, using the Sorrell’s praxis model, will move through their reflection and learning.

**SITE SUPERVISOR EVALUATION**
There will be a mid-term and final assessment of the student’s performance by a site supervisor. The assessment is based on site supervisor’s interaction with the student as well as feedback received from other staff that have had contact with the student. The mid-term evaluation will not affect the student’s grade, but will help to strengthen and support the student throughout the rest of their internship. However, the final site supervisor assessment will count toward the student’s final grade.

**PORTFOLIO**
The portfolio is meant to “pull it all together.” In writing this paper, students draw upon their reflective papers, interview, required readings, class discussions, discussions from colleagues at internship, and general observations. This paper should be around 7 - 8 pages. This paper has three sections: personal, workplace and intercultural awareness. Students should reflect on all they have experienced and learned during their internship in relation to their learning objectives.

**Points of discussion – Personal and professional development**
1) What are your learning goals for your internship? How do they relate to personal and professional goals in 5 years? 10 years? What skills are important to accomplish these goals? What opportunities does your internship provide for acquiring relevant skills?
2) Following your internship, did you achieve personal and professional goals? Why or why not? What was challenging? What was easy? What did you learn and why does it matter? What will you do differently next time you start a new internship or job? Did you improve on the career competencies outlined in your internship report paper?
3) What makes you a good candidate for this job? Write down a job that you would like and respond to an interview question in which you are asked to highlight three skills you have developed during the internship. How have you developed these skills over the course of your internship? Why are these skills important in your chosen career? If these skills are different from what you listed in your learning goals, describe why and how this is the case at the end of this paper section.
Portfolio (continued)

Points of discussion – The workplace
Analyze the structure of the organization, role and duties performed in internship, and the organizations’ position and its importance in your host culture. Include a selection of work samples or other artifacts. Choose artifacts that reflect what you did as well as what you learned during your internship.

Points of discussion - Intercultural awareness
Critically assess intercultural differences and similarities from host to home culture. Describe two expectations you had about your country’s work culture. Are these expectations similar or different from the U.S. work culture and why? Compare your career in your host culture to the same one in the U.S. What are differences? What are similarities? How well prepared are you accommodate the work norms of either country?

Comparative Research
Students who wish to enroll in the course and receive 6 credits will conduct independent research on a topic relevant to the mission of their internship host organization. Students will develop their research thesis in conjunction with the course instructor and site supervisor. Students will submit work representative of acquired knowledge and skills including a research paper that includes justification of the research, description of methods, relevant findings and conclusion (20 page). In a separate document, students will analyze the research process and discuss skills needed for independent research (3 – 4 page). Students who elect to conduct a 6-credit internship should expect to undertake additional work equivalent to a 3-credit course (roughly 135 hours).
Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus with adequate notice to the students.

Unit 1, May 18 - 25

Discussion and Themes:
1. Introduction to Panama and Bocas del Toro Region

Reading:
- World FactBook - Panama
- Panama Canal divides a country into haves and have-nots

2. Experiential Learning Model
- Reflecting Inward: Developing Self-Awareness
- Reflective Practice
- Setting Goals

Reading:

Assignments:
- Individual Learning Plan (due 27 May)
- Reflective journaling
Unit 2, May 25 – 31

Discussion & Themes:

1. Culture & Intercultural Communication

Reading:
- Deardorff, D. Theory reflections: intercultural competence framework/model.

Assignment:
- Personal statement of culture and diversity
- Reflective journaling

Checking-In:
- Reflective and Reflexive Practice
- Setting Personal Goals

(individual times will be arranged)

Unit 3, June 1 - 7

Discussion & Themes:

1. Intercultural Competence

Reading:

2. The workplace
   - Organizational structure
   - Multicultural teams

Reading:
Assignment:
- Reflective journaling

Checking-In:
(individual times will be arranged)

Unit 4, June 9 – 16

Discussion and Themes:
1. The Internship Experience
   - Organizational structure and internships
   - Developmental stages of an internship

Reading:
- Developmental stages of an internship – Swietzer and King
- Developmental stages of an internship - Slides
- Hofstede & Hall: Cultural Dimensions
- Global Leadership: Shut up and Listen: https://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli.want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen

Assignments:
- Understanding Place – Organization and Community Analysis
- Reflection synthesis - #1

Checking-In:
(individual times will be arranged)

Unit 5, June 16 – 23

Discussion and themes #1:
- Learning goals/Objectives check-in
- In-class Reflection

Discussion and themes #2:
- Developing a professional identity
Assignments:
  - Professional Interview

Checking-In:
(individual times will be arranged)

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**Unit 6, June 23 – 30**

*Discussion and theme - #1:*
  - Community Mapping
  - What are Critical Incidents and Connections
  - Zooming Out: Connection to larger economic, political, cultural aspects of Bocas del Toro

*Reading:*

*Assignments:*
  - Internship Site Tours
  - Organization & Community Mapping

Checking-In:
(individual times will be arranged)
Unit 7, July 1 – 8

Discussions & themes - 1:
- Connections to Professional and Personal Goals
- Resume, interview, cover letter incorporating internship learnings
- Practice for Mock job interviews

Reading:
- STAR Method (handout)
- Skill Statements (handout)

Discussion and Themes - 2:
- Presentations & Final Portfolios
- Re-entry
- Mock Interviews

Reading:
- [https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation](https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation)

Assignment:
- Reflection: Resume/cover letter using STAR Method and Skill Statement prompts (to be incorporated into final portfolio)

Checking-In:
(individual times will be arranged)

Unit 8, July 9 – 11

Discussion & Themes:
- Final learning and meaning-making
- Reentry

Reading:
- Storti

Assignments:
- Final presentations –Public speaking
- Reflection synthesis
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks. The final grade will take into consideration preparation required for class (i.e. readings) and participation in class discussions.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.