

Criminal Justice Internships at Valdosta State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice
Student Manual/Syllabus
CRJU 4910 (A&B)

***MANY, IF NOT ALL, CJ AGENCIES REQUIRE BACKGROUND CHECKS ON ALL STUDENT APPLICANTS—THEREFORE STUDENTS MUST BEGIN THE APPLICATION PROCESS NO LATER THAN MID-TERM OF THE SEMESTER PRIOR TO THE PROPOSED INTERNSHIP. SEE DR. PRINE BELOW FOR DETAILS ON THE APPLICATION PROCESS.**

Contact Information: Address all correspondence (inquiries, applications, weekly reports, and term papers) to Dr. Prine, Office UC 1103, e-mail rkprine@valdosta.edu, and postal address is: Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, VSU, Valdosta, GA 31698

Who is eligible for CJ Internship? The eligibility requirements are as follows: the applicant must be a CJ major, they must have permission of their academic advisor, and the Director of the CJ Internship program (Dr. Prine); application forms must be filled out and returned to Dr. Prine's office no later than midterm of the semester prior to the internship. Section A is for three semester hours of credit and Section B is for six. The student must have accumulated a minimum of 60 semester hours of credit, including CRJU 1100, Introduction to Criminal Justice, and nine additional hours of CJ coursework. Other specific academic requirements will be determined by the nature of the field agency, e.g., CRJU 2100, Survey of Law Enforcement is a requirement to intern with law enforcement agencies.

What is an internship? An internship is an opportunity for a student to gain field experience through limited participant observation by working with a Criminal Justice agency/organization. The amount of actual participation will depend on the various department's needs and policies. Students will never be allowed to conduct operations that they are not certified to do, e.g., make an arrest. However, they might very well have the opportunity to observe officers engage in field operations. The internship allows the student to gain first hand knowledge about what it is like to work in a specific Criminal Justice agency.

What are the benefits of an Internship? First of all it's a great learning experience! It's a terrific way for a student to expand their education outside the classroom! In many ways the internship is like an extended field trip, but one with more responsibility and thus more opportunity for learning. Students obtain first hand knowledge about the day to day functions of a particular agency. They get a personal view of what it is like to work as a police or probation officer, a district attorney, a criminal defense lawyer, a corrections counselor, or a juvenile justice professional. A successful internship is a great resume builder, especially for traditional students whose work experiences may be somewhat limited. An internship is a great way to begin net-working, students will meet successful criminal justice professionals as they go about their everyday routines. Not only will you gain from personal interactions and interviews with these people, many times they will agree to become a reference for you, this is not an opportunity easily

made in a typical university setting! Insiders may also have tips about upcoming jobs. While an internship is certainly not a guarantee of a later placement, many students “got their foot in the door” by completing successful internships.

This course will address the following VSU General Education Outcomes:

- 1) Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems. Students will describe and analyze any ethical dilemmas that they see within the context of their field experiences. Usually this will not involve the intern directly but will include either CJ practitioners or clients. As always the intern will not identify any officer or client by name in either the description or analysis of their field experiences.
- 2) Students will use computer and information technology when appropriate. All weekly reports will be turned in electronically; also, many of the sponsoring agencies require interns to use computers for data entry or analysis (e.g., juvenile justice, probation, and the public defender’s office).
- 3) Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening. Both the weekly reports and term paper will be graded on content, grammar, and spelling.

This course will address the following Educational Outcomes in Criminal Justice:

- 1) To develop in students an understanding and appreciation of the structure and function of the criminal justice system as it applies to the ethical treatment of adults and juveniles within the context of law and the Constitution of the United States. In an internship experience the students are in a unique position to witness the actual workings of the criminal justice system because they are placed with agencies in law enforcement, courts, corrections, or juvenile justice.
- 2) To develop an understanding of various theories in criminology, their strengths and weaknesses, and their role in gaining an understanding of crime. Students will apply their understanding of theory to the real world situations that they experience during the internship. This application will be manifest in their term papers which includes an analysis section. One of the student’s objectives is to compare and contrast course concepts with their actual internship experiences and to discuss these similarities and differences in their term papers.

What is the time commitment per week? There are two options for students. CRJU 4910 A requires a minimum of 10 hours per week of work for 3 semester hours of credit. CRJU 4910 B requires a minimum of 20 hours per week of work for 6 semester hours of credit.

Important Dates: For the Fall semester 2010, unless the participating agency requires otherwise, Internships will begin on 16 August and end on 06 December. It is important that the student check the dates of VSU Holidays in advance and let their agency supervisor know these in advance. In general Interns are not expected to work on official VSU holidays. **For the Fall 2010 semester VSU Holiday dates are: Labor**

Day 06 September; Fall Break 18-19 October; Thanksgiving Holiday 24-26 November. The Internship paper is due no later than 06 December—this is an absolute deadline—NO EXTENSIONS.

What types of agencies participate? A wide variety of agencies participate in intern programs including: Office of Juvenile Justice (several locations including the Valdosta Office), District Attorneys' (generally these Interns are assigned to the Victim/Witness Assistance programs), Probation, Parole, Police Departments, Sheriff's Departments, State Corrections (generally these are limited to the Counseling Unit), Social Security Administration, Victim's Assistance Programs, Department of Family and Children's Services, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (very competitive). Keep in mind that filling out an application doesn't guarantee placement, some internships are highly competitive and spaces are limited. Currently, most federal placements will require students to live and work in the Atlanta or some other metropolitan area. One of the most prestigious Internships in our area is at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Ga. This is a highly competitive placement with applicants from all over the U.S., not only must the student have an outstanding GPA they must apply several months in advance. Check the FLETC website for specific dates.

What are the academic expectations? All interns must keep a **weekly journal**. The journal will summarize the students experiences for each week of work completed. As a general rule there will be 15 weekly reports submitted during the regular Fall and Spring semesters and 8 reports for Summer sessions. **The faculty supervisor should receive these reports no later than each following Monday by 12:00 noon.** Weekly reports may be submitted electronically in a Word document or via a printed copy. Printed copies must be in the faculty supervisor's office by the same deadline above. Electronic submissions are especially desirable for internships conducted out of town or out of state.

What type of information is appropriate for the weekly reports? Weekly reports should be clear, concise, and proofread. Weekly reports are mainly descriptive in nature. In Anthropological terms you are an Observer/Participant. Your main role is a university student, you are observing the functions of a CJ agency/office and you are a reporter. Your secondary role as participant is to help carry out the functions of your agency/office. In a sense you are doing fieldwork, qualitative research if you will, in a CJ environment. You should report what interests you and is relevant to the study of CJ. Were you a part of an interesting conversation related to policies/procedures? Did you learn something new today? Did you attend an interview, an arrest, a court case? Did you help someone in the office accomplish a task? Did you assist a victim, citizen, or client with specific information or aid? All of these items and more are relevant to your weekly observations. In order to keep your observations accurate and detailed, I highly recommend that you keep a daily journal of your internship experiences. **All weekly reports submitted electronically (as a Word attachment) should be sent to rkprine@valdosta.edu**

In addition to the journal the student will construct an **internship paper** which will include: a brief history of the agency, an overview of the agency (mission statement, jurisdiction, and organization), and an analysis of the agency which may include suggestions for improvement or reform based upon the internship experience. In addition, the student is expected to apply course concepts to their internship experience.

E.g., if the internship is with a law enforcement agency the student should apply principles and concepts gained from CRJU 1100 Introduction to Criminal Justice and 2100 Survey of Law Enforcement, to their experiences. However, other coursework may be equally relevant e.g., CRJU 3300 Criminal Law, CRJU 3310 Criminal Procedure, and CRJU 3700 Ethics in Criminal Justice. You should place these observations within your analysis section. As a general rule the term paper should be a minimum of eight pages for a 3 hour program and twelve pages for a 6 hour program of study.

Major Headings for the term paper are: **History; Overview; Analysis; Conclusion.** Include a Reference section if you refer to Policy Manuals, the Georgia Code, local or state press, or any other relevant materials.

Term papers are due no later than the last day of regularly scheduled classes for that semester, this is an absolute deadline. Papers may be submitted either electronically as a Word document or as a hard copy with laser quality print. Hard copies may be turned in to the Departmental secretary in UC 1120 (she will mark it with the date/time) or to me in UC 1103.

What are the agency expectations? Each student will receive an evaluation from their agency supervisor based upon the following criteria: punctuality, attendance, appropriate attire, cooperation with supervisor and other agency personnel, initiative, ability to follow directions, ability to perform assignments, response to supervision, writing ability, speaking ability, professional potential, and overall performance. Especially important is the final category, overall performance. The agency supervisor will assign a grade on each of these categories by indicating Superior (A), Above Average (B), Average (C), Below Average (D), Unsatisfactory (F) or Unable to Observe.

What is the code of conduct for students? Each student intern MUST abide by the following rules of conduct: Always show up for work on time and dressed in an appropriate fashion. If you have to miss a day due to illness, family emergency or other reasonable excuse you must notify your agency supervisor in advance or ASAP depending on the circumstances. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of U (Unsatisfactory). You should never volunteer for work that you are not qualified to do, you do not make arrests and you do not carry firearms. You must respect all the rules pertaining to agency information. You never discuss the elements of cases or records and you never share that information with anyone outside the agency. You must maintain the agency's protocol on confidential information. Any violation of confidentiality rules will result in an immediate dismissal and may include additional sanctions from the agency. You must avoid participating in office "gossip" and you should not show favoritism toward any of the people that you work with. Fraternizing with agency personnel is not allowed, simply put, you do not date the people that you work with at any time during your internship. If you experience any problems during your internship you should report those ASAP to your agency supervisor and the intern director.

How does my grade in CRJU 4910 A or B affect my GPA? The internship grade is either an S (Satisfactory) or a U (Unsatisfactory). Basically, the grade does not affect one's GPA but the hours, three or six, will count toward the 120 hour minimum for graduation. Obviously, if a student receives a U they will not achieve any credit hours for their experience. The three or six hours in CRJU 4910 will count as part of the CRJU

upper division electives (see your CRJU graduation checklist). In order to achieve a grade of S the student's written work and performance evaluations must reflect an overall grade of at least a B.

Do I get a paycheck? Unfortunately this is one of the weaknesses of the internship experience. As a general rule students are NOT paid for their work either by the agency or the Criminal Justice Program at VSU. Occasionally interns will be offered a stipend by an agency, but these are relatively rare. Students should not approach agencies with the expectation of financial award.

What are the academic qualifications? Students must be Criminal Justice majors with a minimum of a 2.5 GPA in the major. They must have at least junior standing (at least 60 semester hours of coursework completed). They must have successfully passed CRJU 1100, Introduction to Criminal Justice and at least three upper division Criminal Justice courses. Some placements may require specific courses, e.g., work with a District Attorney's Office would require CRJU 2300 Judicial Process, CRJU 3300 Criminal Law, and CRJU 3310 Criminal Procedure.

Are there other qualifications? Yes, as a general rule an agency will not accept anyone that they wouldn't consider hiring. In other words students will have to pass a background investigation. ANY STUDENT WHO ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE EITHER THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR OR THE CJ AGENCY DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS WILL BE DENIED AN INTERNSHIP. IF THE DECEPTION IS UNCOVERED AFTER PLACEMENT THE STUDENT WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC U AND MAY VERY WELL FACE DISCIPLINARY CHARGES FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES. Due to the amount of time needed to complete background investigations students should apply early, **applications should be completed no later than two weeks prior to the mid-term of the semester PRIOR to the semester of the internship.** Also, keep in mind some agencies also require higher academic standards than the Internship minimum, e.g., the GBI (Georgia Bureau of Investigation) requires a GPA of 3.0. The VSU Internship minimum requirements may never substitute for a specific agency standard.

Can I take regular classes on campus during an Internship? Yes, but there are limitations. As a general rule, if a student is taking CRJU 4910 A (3 hours) they may take no more than 6 hours of regular coursework on campus. If a student is taking CRJU 4910 B (6 hours) they should take no more than 3 hours of regular coursework on campus. Exceptions will depend on the students overall GPA, graduation plans, and the discretion of the Internship Director.

Can I keep a part-time job and still do an Internship? Yes, but there are limitations. Students should not work more than 20 hours per week in a part-time job and also enroll in CRJU 4610 A. Students should not work more than 10 hours in a part-time job if taking CRJU 4610 B. The above also includes work-study students employed by VSU.

Can I do an Internship at my place of employment? Generally no, because internships are meant to provide traditional students a work experience that they would not normally receive while at VSU. Students who are already employed by an agency

have already received this work experience! One exception is an administrative internship. Here a regular officer or staff personnel is given a temporary assignment to another division thereby gaining experiences that are not a part of their typical duties and/or responsibilities. Such an alternative placement would need to last at least the length of a regular semester.

How do I register? First, you must be accepted into the internship program and fill out an application as soon as possible, for reasons given above START EARLY—YOU SHOULD BEGIN THE PROCESS NO LATER THAN MID-TERM OF THE SEMESTER PRIOR TO THE PROPOSED INTERNSHIP. You must work closely with the Intern Coordinator in identifying a potential internship and gaining an initial interview with an agency. Once you have gained acceptance with a specific agency, and only then, will the Coordinator register you for CRJU 4910 A or B.