

English 398/498 English Internship

Sample Syllabus (Updated Spring 2016)

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The English Internship (English 398/498) is designed to provide English majors and minors with opportunities to reflect on the transition from school to a professional life. A degree in English is terrific preparation for a variety of careers; however, unless you are in English Education or Publishing Studies, there may be little direct connection between what you study in your English classes and what you do in your professional life.

First Things First: Confirm Your Contact Information

Each semester, you need to complete (or review) the following online form to confirm your contact information and the contact information for your internship. Please complete or review this form **the first week of classes**.

<https://survey.lit.ilstu.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=7IKJ3892K>

Because you login with your ISU ID and password to fill out this form, you can review and edit as needed.

If for any reason, you can't fill out the form, email me your contact information, your supervisor's contact information, and your schedule. Also, please let me know what problems you are having.

Course Requirements

In addition to your duties at your internship site, which will be assigned by your site supervisor, I ask you to do the following:

- Keep an internship journal and send me entries weekly.
- Construct an annotated bibliography of articles from professional journals on a topic related to your internship.
- Provide contextualized examples of your work product during the internship.
- Write an assessment report of your professional development in the internship.

All of these assignments are described in this syllabus. This syllabus is the only assignment description you will need from me. Most of your internship will involve work assigned by your site supervisor. However, it is important that you make connections and articulate differences between your internship experiences and your academic experiences. This is the primary purpose of the following assignments.

Internship Journal (25% of grade)

Due Every Week

You should write one entry a week about how your internship is going. Please start your entry with the hours you have worked on your internship for the week and a running total of the hours you have worked on the internship so far this semester. Your hours should include time spent at the internship site, time working on internship tasks at home (whether, writing, designing, editing or researching), and time spent working on projects for me. You must accumulate 48 hours of internship work for each credit hour you have signed up for, that is 144 hours for 3 credits or 288 for six. As in past semesters, it is fine to work more hours some weeks and less hours other weeks. The decision to alter your schedule is strictly up to you and your supervisor. I ask you to track your hours not to check up on you, but to help you stay on track and avoid last minute problems. In the past, I only asked virtual interns to track hours, but as more and more interns move to blended models with at least some internship work done at home, I have come to believe that everyone would benefit from tracking their hours. If you feel the nature of your internship makes tracking hours busy work, please see me about waiving this requirement.

Continue your journal entry by describing the work you do from day to day, the people you work with, and your work settings. Then reflect on the significance of those experiences. Where appropriate also discuss the knowledge and skills that you have gained from your formal college education that you find applicable to the work in your internship (if any). You should be learning new skills and concepts, as well, and these should be part of your internship record. Finally, please record your feelings and evaluations of the internship experience from week to week. I have experimented a variety of structures for submitting journal entries, and I have found that asking you to submit journal entries weekly works the best. When I read about your internship experiences each week, I have a better chance of spotting emerging issues and getting involved before those issues turn into problems.

Many interns initially express doubts about themselves, about the people they work with, and about the internship itself. This seems to be a normal reaction to the professional work experience, and it is similar to what graduates feel during their first weeks or months in a job. If your internship doesn't begin with such feelings of doubt, that's great, but I hope it is some reassurance to you that negative feelings are common in the beginning. Please feel free to express these feelings in your journal. Feel free, also, to contact me if you have any concerns about the internship.

When you submit your journal entries via email, I will acknowledge your email that day. I will then read and respond to your journal entry within a week. If you do not hear from me within one day, please follow up. We have experienced many emails problems with the move to Office 365; do not assume I received your work. After my initial confirmation, if you haven't heard back from me in a week, feel free to send me a gentle reminder. Some students send me individual entries, while other people like to write the journal in a single file, appending new entries to the old ones. Either way is fine, but if you keep your journal in a single file, find some way to clearly distinguish new material from old material.

You may also write your journal as a blog using the blogging platform of your choice. Ideally I will be

able to subscribe to the blog and be notified of new entries. Please keep in mind, however, that a blog is a public document. If you blog (tweet, pin, instagram) about your internship using any social media platform, **assume your supervisor is reading your work**. If you choose to write your journal in a public forum, you can still email me any specific entries that you do not wish to share with the internet.

If you are a dropbox or google docs fan, my google account is jim.kalmbach@gmail.com; my dropbox ID is kalmbach@ilstu.edu. It is fine to share a folder of materials with me. If you have found a new social media platform you like, let me know, I will be happy to use it.

I consider your journal to be confidential. I will not share your journal with anyone in the organization where you interning. You are, of course, free to share it with anyone you wish.

Note: Some internships may involve working with proprietary information that must be kept confidential. I do not ask you to include any confidential information in your journal or in any reports or writing samples you submit to me.

Keeping a weekly journal for an entire semester can get to be a grind. To help ease that grind, I offer three **life-gets-in-the-way free passes** that you can use to skip a weekly journal entry once in the first half of the semester and twice in the second half. Be sure to email me that you are skipping a week; there will be no questions asked. These passes are especially valuable towards the end of the semester when nothing new is happening in your internship.

In evaluating your journal, I ask myself, how well have you documented your internship? Have you kept me informed of what you are doing, are you reflecting on your experiences? The quality of your experiences and your reflection on that experience are my most important criteria.

Annotated Bibliography and Writing/Editing Samples (25% of grade)

Due halfway through your Internship

Most professions have professional journals in which scholars in the field, as well as professionals who work outside the academy, publish articles about current research, theory, new practices, and the roles of new technologies in the profession.

Go to the library and find **at least two** of these journals and look at the issues for the past two years. Then find **at least five articles** that seem interesting to you because of the work you are doing in your internship, or because they relate in some significant way to your internship, or your professional goals. Write an annotated bibliography of these articles. Your annotation of each article should briefly summarize the article and discuss its relevance to some aspect of your own internship. An example of a good annotated bibliography entry is included at the end of this syllabus. Your bibliography can combine any mix of online or print sources, but those sources should be credible and appropriate for the project.

Include **an introduction to your annotated bibliography** describing the professional focus of the

articles and why you choose that focus. If you skip the introduction, I will ask you to revise as I find the introduction to be extremely helpful in evaluating your annotated bibliography.

Follow a standard style guide such as MLA, APA, or Chicago in constructing your bibliography. See <https://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> for help on citations.

You may need to ask your internship site supervisor or a professor what journals are especially important in your field. If you have any trouble finding appropriate articles, contact me and I will try to help you find what you need.

Work Samples

Due halfway through your Internship.

Please provide samples of your internship work products halfway through your internship. I realize, however, that some internships consist of work that does not involve written artifacts. Here are some situations you may encounter and how you can deal with them:

- In general if you do not anticipate having written products you can share with me, you should send me an email describing the work you are completing in a typical week of your internship.
- If a significant part of your internship involve completing routine forms, I do not need to see these forms, but again describe your work.
- If your work products are confidential, I do not need to see them, just describe the general nature of this work.
- If your work products are largely digital (for example, if you do a good deal of online copy editing), I encourage you to supplement your description of your work with pictures of your screen, documenting your workflow.

If you are likely to only have rough drafts of your work products midway through the semester, I am happy to wait until they are ready to see them. Contact me, proposing an alternative deadline.

Always Contextualize your Work

When you send me writing samples, please **contextualize** those samples just as you would the artifacts in a portfolio so that I, or another reader, can make sense of that work. The easiest way to create context is to write a paragraph about each piece of writing or editing you submit. In the paragraph, talk about when the piece was produced, for who? for what purpose? Also mention if there are any unique or distinguishing features about the work that a reader should know about.

Don't send me documents without context.

Professional Development Assessment report (25% of grade)

Due no later than Friday of Finals Week

To complete your internship, you will write a report of at least 1000 words in which you assess your professional development as a result of the internship. In this report, you should make connections

between your academic work and the work you did in your internship. You should be as specific as possible, discussing courses you have taken, skills and concepts you learned in school, projects or assignments in classes that you see as relating to your internship work.

You should also discuss and cite at least two of the articles from your annotated bibliography. Cite the articles using an appropriate style (for example, MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style). Your discussion should show how the articles pertain to your internship. You need not agree with the articles, but you should fairly discuss what they say and how it relates to your experience, whether or not you agree with the writers' opinions.

In addition, discuss those aspects of your internship that you believe helped you move beyond the academic context to learn professional practices that could not have been easily learned in a formal classroom environment. This might include applications of academic learning that you think were possible only in the internship experience, or it might include concepts and skills that were unique to the internship.

Finally, please discuss anything you think could be done to strengthen such internship experiences for other students. This might include courses that you would like to have taken, not only courses we offer but also that you haven't taken, but courses you think should be offered. This could also include skills and concepts you think should be taught in courses that are now offered.

All of your internship assignments can be turned in via e-mail. If you turn in print work which you hope to get back, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope or make other arrangements with me.

Option for Returning Interns

If you are continuing an internship from last semester and your duties are essentially the same, I encourage you to propose an alternative project for the annotated bibliography or the internship report. Such a project often involves more in depth research into a specific career that interests you. Feel free to discuss this option with me. I welcome alternative projects.

Evaluations by Site Supervisor (25% of grade)

Two evaluations will be done by your site supervisor, one at midterm and one at the end of the term. I will contact your supervisor with more information about these evaluations. Although I have included an example of the evaluation form for your information, I will send the actual evaluation directly to your supervisor, and I will collect the results. Your supervisor should go over the evaluation with you, but some do not do so unless they are reminded. If you want to discuss your evaluation with your site supervisor, please ask them about it. If they do not discuss the evaluation with you, I will allow you to see it.

Expectations about your Internship Work

One criterion I use in evaluating written assignments is to look at your writing the way a client or supervisor would look at it. As a professional (or as a professional in training), your work should be

carefully proofread, it should be contextualized, and you should label it with your name and page numbers.

I expect your writing to be **free of careless errors** in terms of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Correctness is particularly important in an internship because your work reflects not only your own professional competency, but also represents the English Department and Illinois State University. Careless work may result in your grade being lowered and/or the assignment returned to you for corrections. The problems I see in internship documents tend to be the consequence of too-casual editing. Take the time to do them well before you turn them in.

I also expect the work you give me to be **contextualized** so that I (or another reader) can make sense of what you have produced outside of the context of your internship. Contextualization is particularly important for your work samples. You create context by writing a paragraph about the piece of writing or editing: When was it produced? For who? For what purpose? Are there any unique or distinguishing features about the work that a reader should know about? Don't send me documents with no context.

Finally, I expect your work (whether journal entries, bibliographies, work samples, or reports) to be **properly labeled** and, when appropriate, to include **page numbers**. Include your name, the course, and the date in each text file you send me. I around five hundred emails about internships each semester. I often print documents to read them. If your document has no identifying information and no page numbers, I have no way to tell who created it or the correct order to read the printed pages.

You should follow these guidelines for all the documents you write during your internship, for both me and for your internship organization. You should be relentless in correcting error; you should always know the audience of your writing and contextualize for that audience; and you should always label and paginate you work so others can use it easily.

As an intern (or a new employee), you have no way of knowing how your documents will circulate once you give that document to someone. That person may forward it to someone else, who with good intentions may forward it to a third person etc. When you proofread, contextualize, and label your documents, you increase the likelihood that your work will be positively received by these unknown audiences, and that you will receive appropriate credit for that work.

Note to Graduate Students

If you are a graduate student completing a professional internship (ENG 498), there are no additional requirements. I expect the depth and quality of your work to reflect your graduate status, and I am willing to renegotiate the requirements of many of my internship assignment so that the assignments better aligns with your professional goals.

Final Notes

If you have any questions about the syllabus or about any of the assignments, please feel free to talk to me about them. The purpose of these assignments is not to test you, but to give you occasions to reflect and to think critically about your professional work experience and the academic experiences

you have had which are supposed to have helped prepare you for a profession. I am happy to discuss these matters with you and to try to help you explore the issues that concern you.

Please feel free to discuss your internship with me if you have concerns about the work, or relationships with people in the organization.

Appendix 1: Sample Annotated Bibliography Entries

Below are four examples of annotated bibliography entries. You can use any citation system you are familiar with but be consistent and be correct. See <https://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> for more information on citation.

Baker, John F. "We're All in This Together." *Publishers Weekly* 250.22 (2003): 26--8.

One type of publisher that I come across while working on the ABR book log (I feel very fortunate to be getting such great literary exposure this semester) is the university press. Baker's article discusses how these presses are doubly feeling the cuts that the states have made in funding. Rather than shutting the presses down due to the lack of money to support their processes, the directors are usually instead fired which is a sad situation as well. Luckily, though, the Association of American University Presses has a website called Books for Understanding. This website was originally created after 9/11 to showcase the books various university presses had published concerning the Middle East, Islamic faith, and terrorism. This website dramatically increased sales for these university presses. But these presses are facing the difficult challenge of finding distribution as the number of independent bookstores decreases. Plus, the university presses cannot afford the high costs of the numerous electronic copies that they have to send out to libraries, reviewers, etc. This article made me think about some of the challenges the Unit faces and how the staff are constantly having to talk about the benefits of the Unit/Pub Unit to the higher-ups at ISU who do not always understand what a valuable resource the Units are.

Gourley, Catherine. "Climb the Research Ladder." *Writing!* 25.3 (2002): 19.

This article discusses how to write a research paper based on the questions the writer really wants to answer. Gourley shares the three levels of questions she asks during her research. The first level of questions is basic, and includes Who? What? When? and Where? The second level of questions is open--ended and includes Why? and How? The third level of questions is rhetorical and questions are asked in order to make a point about an issue. Every story I am writing for the internship requires research; I must seek out and interview the people and stories I will be writing. What I find amusing is that I completely neglected these basic questions when I wrote the interview questions. I am sure some of the suggested questions are buried in my text somewhere, but I did not consciously run through these questions and base my interviews around them. Gourley's article reminds me that I cannot forget the basics while working on any large project. Perhaps I should revisit my interview questions and incorporate the three levels of questions before I go through with the interviews!

Fitzpatrick, Kathy R. "Public Relations and the Law: A Survey of Practitioners." *Public Relations* 22 (1996): 8.

The article "Public Relations and the Law" pointed out that many public relations professionals do not fully understand the laws that govern their profession. This lack of knowledge of the laws that pertain to public relations puts the practitioners and their companies at risk. While it is true that these laws are forever changing, most public relations personnel or the company they represent prefer to follow the advice of legal counsel when it comes to problems or litigation surrounding such issues. At State Farm we look to the Human Resource Department to make sure we are continually receiving the updated information on rules and regulations. Working in Public Affairs can be a very sticky area when it comes to legal matters. Many of the documents written in this area need to be reviewed for legal liability reasons. Also, when joining the Public Affairs department an employee must sign a waiver stating they will not reveal any information they obtain from the files viewed in the department.

Davis, Marjorie T. "Shaping the Future of Our Profession." *Technical Communication* 48:2 (2001): 139--144.

This article has more to do with my potential career as a technical writer over the next few years, but relates to the start of my career with this internship. Davis' article surrounds the issue of professionalism in this relatively new and rapidly expanding field. She is very much concerned with the continuous advances in technological tools and the abilities of technical communicators to keep up with these new innovations. She proposes that the technical communication profession has long been one of passive construction, merely managing information. Now, technical communication professionals are delving into the creation and project side of this field, working closer with SMEs and other specialists in the actual creation and initiation of projects and documents. She says that universities have also begun to reflect this shift within the profession, as programs no only focus on the methodology of the system but also the practice and creation, especially through the use and teaching of new technologies important to the communicators' jobs. As I am just experiencing this field, I am definitely finding that I started this internship on more of a passive end, but as I learn more about the technologies and processes involved, I beginning the receive small amounts of "creation training." This article is important for me to keep in mind as I begin a career as a technical editor and as the field grows.

Appendix 2: Midterm/Final Evaluation form for Student Interns

Below is an example of the internship evaluation form that I use. I will contact your supervisor with the actual evaluation form at midterms and at the end of your internship.

**English Studies Internship Program
Department of English
Illinois State University**

Please go over this evaluation with the student.
Please evaluate in terms of the following criteria:

1. Professional Conduct

Punctuality **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Attire & grooming **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Communication with staff **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Communication with public **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Comments:

2. Job Performance

Learns duties **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Accepts supervision **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Cooperates with other staff **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Able to work independently **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Productivity **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Comments:

3. Qualifications

Writing is coherent, appropriate for subject matter and audiences **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Editing is accurate and effective **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Able to collaborate harmoniously and productively with other writers or editors **Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory**
Knowledge of computer applications, or ability to learn new applications and systems needed for work
Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Unsatisfactory
Comments:

4. Professional Growth

Please comment briefly on specific areas in which you have observed growth in the intern's mastery of professional skills and knowledge during the time spent with your organization. If growth was not evident in certain areas, please comment on your concerns.

(Asked at final evaluation only)

Could the English Professional Practice Program at Illinois State University have helped the student and/or your organization to be better prepared for the internship?

Thank you for taking time to fill out this evaluation form, and for providing an important educational experience for this student. Please feel free to offer any additional comments that will help us in evaluating the intern's progress at midterm.