Southern Connecticut State University

College of Education

Department of Information and Library Science

**ILS 582 Library Science Internship**

**Course Overview**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A professional work experience in an academic, public, or special collections library; a school library media center; an archives; or another similar institution. By arrangement. 3 credits.

PREREQUISITES

Fifteen (15) credits in Information and Library Science (see guidelines)

PURPOSE

Fieldwork in a library or information agency is designed to provide students with a supervised professional experience which integrates the theoretical and practical aspects of activities in the student's professional field.

PLACEMENT

Placement assignments are based on three factors: preference of the student, agreement of a cooperating sponsor institution or agency, and approval of the academic advisor and internship coordinator.

Students ready to enroll in ILS 582 must contact their advisor one semester prior to intended placement. All paperwork must be completed prior to enrolling in ILS 582 (See guidelines).

TIME COMMITMENT

A Library and Information Science Internship is planned to comprise 150 hours (3 credits) during the course of one or more academic terms, including summer. Students are expected to keep a work schedule agreed upon cooperatively by the student and the sponsoring agency.

This time commitment is split between 120 hours of work with the host organization, versus thirty hours of academic work. Academic work includes journaling, completing relevant readings, and writing the final course paper couse. These academic activities should not be completed when on site for an internship or when otherwise completing work for the host organization.

Internship hours cannot overlap students’ present careers and must be scheduled around personal work responsibilities.

SUGGESTED FIELD EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Libraries and other agencies that cooperate in an Internship will incorporate the following within the internship scope:

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A. Interview – the student will be interviewed by their future site supervisor(s) from the hosting institution. This experience should allow students to understand what it is like to be interviewed for a libraries or archives position and prepare accordingly.

B. Orientation – this should provide introduction to the various facets of the library or agency and an overview of library operation. While the majority of each internship should focus on a specific department within a library or archives, allowing students to spend time learning about the overall structure of their host organization is a valuable experience and good use of her or his time.

C. Student Assignments - following the orientation, the student and the site supervisor will agree upon one to three projects or areas of focus. The selection should be based upon library need, student interest, and availability of supervision and mentorship for the student. The internship should not be comprised of stereotypical “coffee fetching” tasks, but instead should provide training that helps prepare the student to be a competent library or archives professional.

D. Final evaluation – the instructor of record will work with the site supervisor to conduct an evaluation of the student at the end of the term. The site supervisor may use a form provided by the Southern Connecticut State University Information and Library Science Department, or they can write an individualized letter discussing the specific knowledge and skills the student developed throughout the internship.

The student will also be expected to journal their experience, complete readings throughout the term to support their experience, and submit a final paper at the end of the term.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will gain professional experiences in one or more the following professional areas:

1. Technical Services

2. Reference and User Services

3. Administrative Operation

4. Programming and Public Outreach

Other service roles beyond these areas in a library or archives are acceptable, especially if they meet ALA Core Competency guidelines, but must first be approved on a case-by-case basis by faculty in the Southern Connecticut State University Information and Library Science Department.

INTERNSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Since the student's role is that of learner and the professional supervisor's role is that of a teacher and trainer, the student is expected to perform and assume responsibility for tasks assigned. The site supervisor is expected to field the student's questions, discuss the student's progress, and critique the student's total experience. If the site supervisor does not need to directly oversee much of the student’s work or delegates this to other library employees, they should meet with the student on a regular, scheduled basis to discuss their progress.

The site supervisor's judgment in evaluation of a student in the internship situation should be based on the performance expected of a beginning professional in the position tempered by knowledge of the student's background (including subject specialties and the number of professional courses completed). As detailed below, the internship coordinator from the Southern Connecticut State University Information and Library Science Department will help to provide the student with additional readings and instruction if further academic training intervention is needed to ensure that both the student and the hosting institution receive the maximum amount of benefit from the internship experience.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

While the primary purpose of this course is to provide students with field experience in a library or archives setting, the internship coordinator will help the student to bridge the gap between professional experience and scholarship. Students will complete between 100 and 250 pages of reading throughout the term. The internship coordinator, site supervisor, and student will work together to select these readings, based primarily on the site supervisor’s assessment of priority learning areas.

Students will submit a short journal entry of approximately 300-500 words to their academic advisor for every twenty hours of professional experience throughout the term (approximately every 2-3 weeks if the internship follows a typical schedule). These reflections should connect the readings to the students’ experience, detail anything learned during their internship, and in rare cases note and problems they have encountered. This will allow the professor to keep track of the student’s progress.

Each student will submit a 12-15 page final paper at the end of the term, providing an overview of their experience and comparing it to what she or he has learned from the course readings and other courses in the MLIS program. This should be organized around the competencies that the internship coordinator, site supervisor, and student agreed upon at the beginning of the term. While this should be formatted as a proper academic paper in APA format, it should also be written as a personal experience and should thus use the first-person pronoun “I,” rather than passive constructions. Students are permitted to reuse sections of their journals for this paper verbatim, but the final result should feel well edited and coherent.

If the internship takes place in an in-person format and is within ninety minutes of Southern Connecticut State University, the internship coordinator will visit the student at their selected site at least once during the academic term. This is an opportunity for the professor to evaluate the student’s work and, most importantly, to thank their site supervisor for their time and effort in supporting the professional growth of Southern Connecticut State University’s MLIS students. If the internship is in an online format or further than ninety minutes from Southern Connecticut State University, the internship coordinator will meet with the student and site supervisor in an online videoconferencing format.