

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
APPLIED EXPERIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY – 830:493
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2015

Instructor: DR. Courtenay Cavanaugh
E-mail: cocavana@camden.rutgers.edu
Office Phone: 856.225.6120

Class Meeting: T/ Th 9:30-10:50am
Classroom: BSB 109
Office hours: T,Th 2-3pm, and by appt

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Welcome to Applied Experience in Psychology!

This course provides a means of engaging in applied work in psychology. By working in a community agency, school, hospital or other social service or psychology institution, you will gain first-hand experiences that will enhance your understanding of psychology. This course consists of: working in an unpaid placement for 6 hours a week for 14 weeks, receiving feedback from a trained supervisor at your placement, participating in class each week, completing weekly reflection papers, and a final class project.

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department. Course activities are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should:

- Have a better understanding of the relations between psychological theory and practice.
- Possess a comprehensive understanding of what an applied job in the field of psychology entails
- Increase personal awareness of your own interest in pursuing a career in psychology.
- Understand how to pursue a career in psychology through graduate school training.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) FIELDWORK PLACEMENT: You must work at an *unpaid* placement for 6 hours a week for 14 weeks. To set up your placement, please complete the following steps:

- 1) Secure a placement with a supervisor who will oversee your work and provide you with feedback.
- 2) Have your supervisor write a letter to the course professor stating that: (a) your supervisor understands that you will work as an *unpaid* employee at the agency for 6 hours a week for 14 weeks; (b) you have agreed upon your general responsibilities at the agency (list these responsibilities in the letter); (c) your direct supervisor(s) has/have been determined (presumably, one of your supervisors should be writing the letter, but any other supervisors should be listed in the letter); and (d) he or she will contact your course professor if any problems with your work at the agency (e.g., not showing up or completing the required hours) arise. A sample letter was sent in early December to all students in an announcement. See Sakai site under announcements.
- 3) Your supervisor's letter serves as a contract for your work and must be presented to the professor by the first class meeting (Tuesday, January 20 or Thursday, January 22nd) or you will be required to drop the course. In order to complete the 14 weeks of your placement, it is necessary for you to begin working the first week of classes.

(Be careful to plan your schedule so that you are able to work during Spring Break week if needed and/or during exam weeks.)

- 4) All fieldwork hours must be completed by the last day of classes. The professor will provide a form for your supervisor to fill out that confirms your completion of the required hours. This form is due to the professor by Monday, May 4th at 3:00pm.

2) ATTENDANCE: Attendance and participation in *weekly class meetings* is mandatory. Although class is scheduled during the Tuesday/ Thursday 9:30-10:50 time period, half of the class will meet on Tuesday and half will meet on Thursdays. The instructor will determine who will meet on each day prior to the start of class. Meetings will serve as a forum during which you will be expected to discuss your experiences at your placement. Questions and concerns should be raised during these meetings and will be addressed by the professor and the other students in the class. In addition, class meetings will consist of relevant exercises and “mini lectures” designed to increase your understanding of the relevant theoretical material and assure your success in this course. Attendance is a significant portion of your class grade and is considered mandatory.

3) JOURNAL: You must write one journal entry per week describing and reflecting on your placement experiences. **You will send this assignment as an attachment in an email to the instructor each week** by Sunday at 5pm (sakai.rutgers.edu). If for any reason your access to the internet or your work/class schedule prohibits you from submitting journals on Sundays, please make arrangements to do so earlier in the week (i.e., not later). It is your responsibility to be sure that your journal entries are received each week. Note: To avoid problems with the instructor being unable to open attachments, please submit all journals in a Microsoft word document format.

Journal entries will best help you to think through your experiences at your placement if they are written immediately following your work for that week. Journal entries should be typed and are expected to be approximately 2 pages long **each** (12 font type, double spaced). Please include your placement name, the date(s) that you did your internship, the date you are writing your journal entry, and the week of the semester on each journal entry. Each journal entry should include 2 parts:

- 1) In approximately 1 paragraph, describe what you did that week at the placement. This part of the entry may read something like this: “I met with my supervisor to discuss the tasks I would complete for the week. I observed patients in various contexts – in a group therapy session, interacting in the game room... I was involved (observed, helped with the paperwork) in three patient evaluations completed by my supervisor.”
- 2) The rest of your journal entry should consist of a reflection on the work you did that week. Some ideas of things you should consider including are: Did you enjoy the work you did? Was it rewarding/exciting/ difficult/ frustrating? What role did your supervisor play that week? Was your supervisor’s feedback helpful - why or why not? How is the work you are doing related to the information you have learned in your other psychology classes? What psychological concepts/ theories are most relevant to your work? Are your experiences helping you to think more clearly about your educational or career objectives? Are there any issues that you have concerns or questions about?

4) FINAL CLASS PROJECT: A final class project integrating your experiences in your fieldwork placement and your theoretical and conceptual understanding of psychology (i.e., information learned in this and other psychology courses) is due on Tuesday April 21st/Thursday, April 23rd. This assignment will consist of 2 parts: a written part turned in to the professor and a brief presentation to the class during the class meeting. A more detailed summary of what this project entails will be provided in a separate handout.

GRADING:

Grades will be computed as follows:

- Completion of fieldwork hours 35%
- Class attendance/ participation 20%
- Journal 25%
- Final Class Project 20%

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Tues, Jan 20/Jan 22	Letter from supervisor establishing fieldwork placement due
Week of Jan 20	Fieldwork hours must begin
Week of April 21 or 23	Final Class project and presentation due in class
Wed, May 4	All field work hours must be completed
Wed, May 4	Supervisor's notice of completion must be turned in to professor by 3:00pm

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:

- 1) This class will be most rewarding for you if you are an active participant in class and view this experience as a collaborative enterprise. To this end, throughout the semester you are encouraged to communicate with your professor (during class and during office hours) and are expected to keep up with all readings and assignments.
- 2) Additional information about this class, and a copy of the syllabus is available on the class Sakai web page. Being unaware of course requirements and expectations is not an excuse for failing to complete any of the assignments in this course.
- 3) If you are in class, you will be expected to be attentive, participate, stay the entire class time, and be prepared for any activities scheduled for that day.
- 4) If you miss a class, you are expected to obtain class notes from a classmate and to stay on top of any of the activities/ discussions missed. It is your responsibility to become informed of any announcements made in class.
- 5) Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on exams and plagiarism. Students caught participate in academic dishonesty will receive a score of zero on the relevant assignment. In addition, instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Scholastic Conduct Committee. Sanctions for academic dishonesty range from failing an assignment to failing a course or expulsion from the University. For additional information about Rutgers' policies concerning academic dishonesty refer to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>
- 6) For disability accommodations, please see the Rutgers web page detailing disability services: <http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. Students who require special accommodations should also contact the instructor within the first few days of class.