Sociology 195CE: Fieldwork in Los Angeles
Community and Corporate Internship Course

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Overview

Sociology is not just a set of topics that are passively studied in the classroom. Rather, it is more accurately described as a set of tools to be actively applied to the social world around us. Sociology 195CE is a first step in the practice of sociology outside of the classroom, in the larger Los Angeles community. Over the course of the 10-week quarter, Sociology 195CE students draw on foundational examples of sociological fieldwork to conduct their own analyses and interpretations of experiences in community and corporate internships. Weekly work culminates in a final ethnographic paper.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students enrolled in this independent study course will have the opportunity to:

- Define and apply the following core concepts: civic engagement, social responsibility, experiential learning, and social construction.
- Apply academic knowledge and critical thinking skills to address situations and challenges that arise in 21st-century work environments;
- Develop and execute a research paper integrating analysis of experiential learning (i.e. an internship) with knowledge gained from an academic discipline;
- Explore how off-campus work experience contributes to an undergraduate’s intellectual, personal, and professional development and informs future career choices.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS:

In order to enroll in Sociology 195CE, students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and complete a course contract. Follow the steps outlined in the enrollment procedure document. You must have completed your intake appointment before you fill out your course contract.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Minimum of 80 hours of work at an off-campus internship (and a signed timesheet)
2. Weekly Written Assignments
3. Five one-on-one meetings (your intake meeting, plus four additional meetings)
4. Final Ethnographic Research Paper
5. Liability Waiver
**Signed Timesheet**

Submit a timesheet with your final paper, signed by your supervisor and documenting the hours that you have worked this quarter. To pass the course, interns must work at least 8 weeks during the 10 week quarter AND work a minimum total of 80 hours (approximately 8–10 hours/week). Failure to complete the minimum requirements and submit a signed timesheet will likely result in an automatic grade reduction to C-/NP. If for any reason you find that you must miss more than the equivalent of one week’s regular shift at your internship or if you must end your internship early, you MUST inform your coordinator IMMEDIATELY. Your coordinator will consult with your internship supervisor and Center administrators about appropriate steps and may advise you to drop the course if it is determined that you are not in a position to pass. A copy of the timesheet is available on the course website.

**Weekly Written Assignments (40%):**

Each week, you are required to complete a 2-3 page, double-spaced written assignment. These assignments should be written like short papers with an introduction and a conclusion. There are two parts to the written assignment. First, you will be asked to summarize the reading(s). Within the summary, highlight particular aspects of the reading(s) that will be important to an analysis of your internship field site. This is much like the ‘literature review’ in the articles you will read for the course.

Second, you will also be given specific questions to answer about the week’s reading(s) in relation to your field site. This should be the bulk of your response paper (i.e. you should spend 1-2 pages on this portion of the written assignment). Your objective is to convince me, both verbally and in writing, that you have done the in-depth mental work necessary to find sociological phenomenon occurring in your field site. You will need to include concrete and specific examples from your site. This is much like the ‘analysis’ section in the articles you will read for the course.

Finally, for each written assignment, please include 1-2 discussion questions based on the readings that you should prepare to discuss in your meeting with your coordinator. These should not be incorporated into the paper, but rather should be included as an addendum.

All assignments must be uploaded to the course website by Saturday at 11:59pm. Each assignment is worth 10 points. 2 points will be deducted for every day the assignment is late.

**One-on-One Meetings/Participation (20%)**

Schedule and attend biweekly discussion sessions with your coordinator (me) at the Center for Community Learning at least 5 times, including intake. Come to each 30-minute discussion session prepared to discuss your experiences at your internship, your weekly response papers, and your progress on your research paper. To receive full credit you must be prepared to have an engaged, interactive meeting. Appointments can be scheduled in person at CCL (Murphy A265); by calling CCL at 310-825-7865; or by emailing the front desk at cclmeetings@college.ucla.edu. Since I am not at CCL every day I am unable to schedule appointments personally, and I cannot meet you outside my office hours. Plan accordingly.

You are responsible for making your own appointments and for scheduling your 5 meetings evenly throughout the quarter (biweekly – i.e. every other week). Each meeting is worth 4 points.
Showing up late and/or unprepared for a meeting will result in the loss of at least one point. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will be asked to reschedule, and the make-up meeting will only be worth half credit. Meetings rescheduled less than 24 hours in advance are worth only half credit (emergencies will be evaluated case-by-case). You may schedule only one meeting per week and MUST complete your second meeting by the end of Week 4 or the meeting will be considered late and will be worth only half credit. Any request to schedule meetings in consecutive weeks must be approved by the coordinator IN ADVANCE and may not be granted. **Failure to complete the minimum requirements will likely result in an automatic grade reduction to C-/NP.** Attending regularly scheduled meetings throughout the entire quarter is required in order to pass a 195CE course and you may be advised to drop at any point in the quarter if this condition is not being met and you are no longer in a position to pass the course.

**Final Ethnographic Paper (40%):**

In the final paper, you will try and bring the reader into the world of the place that you have been studying. You are producing a mini-ethnography of your field site. Choose the two weekly paper topics that you found most interesting throughout the quarter. Find three outside scholarly articles (i.e., peer-reviewed, academic articles that are not on the course syllabus). Using these articles and two from the course, build on the analyses you conducted during the quarter. This paper should present a clear thesis about YOUR individual and specific internship fieldsite and it should relate to a more general field of sociological inquiry. You should draw on the concrete examples you used to write your analyses each week. The final paper should be approximately 8-10, double-spaced, and use Times Roman, 12pt. font with 1-inch page margins. You will submit a paper proposal and annotated bibliography in Week 8 though you are still expected to submit a works cited page with your final paper. Do not submit your work as a PDF file. It must be a Word document.

**Liability Waiver:**
Available at the Center for Community Learning and required by UCLA for off-campus work.

**WEEKLY READING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1: An Introduction to Civic Engagement and Your Field Site**

**Readings:** “High-Impact Educational Practices” by Sweitzer, Frederick H. & King, Mary A. 2009 in *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development*, pp: 5-8

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**Written Assignment:**
Briefly summarize the reading by Sweitzer and King, and briefly describe your internship. Based on the discussion of civic development, in what ways does your organization fulfill a civic mission? What do you hope to gain, personally and professionally, through this internship? How do you foresee your role at the site contributing to the civic mission? (This should be roughly one page.)
In contrast to Sweitzer and King, Alexandre Frenette’s research focuses on what “interns actually do” (366).

Method questions: What are Frenette’s three research questions? What purpose does it serve to cite previous literature? In addition to participant observation, how else does he collect data? Substantive questions: What is unique about the culture industry and its flexible workers relative to other industries? What are some pros and cons (or ambiguities) of internships for the intern, as well as the company? What are his preliminary findings?

Implications for you: Now that you’ve learned about some of the challenges facing interns, how does this make you feel about your internship from the outset? Regardless of whether your internship is in the culture industry or another sector, how do you think your experience will be similar to and/or different from what Frenette describes? This is a question you can return to at the end of the quarter in your reflection on the internship experience. (Your responses based on the Frenette article should be your second and third page.)

Week 2: An Introduction to the Ethnographic Process


Written Assignment: Answer the following questions based on your understanding of the reading. Why do the authors believe so little has been published about writing field notes? What is the benefit of reviewing such practices? What are the advantages of writing field notes as opposed to keeping a journal? Using your own words, what is meant by participant observation, immersion and resocialization? When speaking of fieldnotes, what do the authors mean when they say, “In a fundamental sense, they constitute a way of life through the very writing choices the ethnographer makes and the stores she tells”? Your answers (roughly 2 pages) to these questions must be uploaded to the course website.

Additionally, spend 10-15 minutes at your internship site observing and writing field notes. Bring these to our first meeting. These field notes do not need to be typed and you do not need to upload the field notes to the course website. But, they should be very detailed for your own record keeping. You should plan to keep an informal journal of field notes throughout the quarter to ensure that you have concrete examples to draw on for each of your weekly assignments and your final paper. We will ask to see them on occasion.

Week 3: Sociological Foundations of Interactions


Written Assignment: Summarize the reading. Sketch Goffman’s main argument. Explain the concepts of line, face, and face-work. Draw on your general knowledge of your field site and at least one concrete example to answer the following questions: What would Goffman say about your internship field site? How are his concepts present in your own internship fieldsite, both in the office, and among relationships with “clientele”? How does the organization/company create a face, and maintain a line? Why is this so? How this might look differently in a different setting?
Week 4: Creating/Managing an Identity and Occupational Dilemmas


**Written Assignment:** Summarize the reading. What is the occupational dilemma, and how does this impact shelter workers’ preferred identities (as “animal lovers”)? Using your experience in the internship field site, identify a major occupational dilemma/obstacle (like that of shelter workers), either affecting an individual worker, a group of workers, or the organization/company as a whole. What is this dilemma and how is it managed through strategies that the employees have devised? [A good starting place for this exercise is to ask, what is the main identity/goal of my organization/company (i.e. a moral firm, or an earth-friendly producer that, say, promotes movies, sells stock advice to clients, provides legal services to clients, attracts viewers to a website, etc). What are the obstacles that occur every day that make accomplishing this identity/goal difficult (i.e. employees are habitually late, competitors offer equal or better products, customers do not truly “need” the product, etc.)? Now, what strategies help neutralize these obstacles?]

Week 5: Using Symbols


**Written Assignment:** Identify and explain three “symbols” that dancers draw upon to carry out their professional tasks. Briefly discuss how the concepts of face, line, and face-work can be seen in the context of counterfeit intimacy at the club. Draw on your general knowledge of your field site and at least one concrete example from your participant observation to answer the following questions: Identify the use of “symbols” by an individual(s), as well as by the organization/company toward its “clientele.” Detail how these symbols are used and the responses they create.

Week 6: Structure and Hierarchy

**Choose one of the following readings and answer the corresponding prompt**


**Written Assignment:** Summarize the reading. What are the three most problematic characteristics on the kill floor? Draw on your general knowledge and at least one concrete example to answer the following questions: In what ways does working at your organization/company (for both you and regular employees) resemble an “assembly line” and does that lead to dehumanization? Is there a “financial trap”? Is there an “intern trap”? How do conditions differ between different places in the work hierarchy? How would you alleviate these issues?

**Written Assignment:** Summarize the reading. What are the most important criteria for being a “real punk” or a “pretender”? Draw on your general knowledge and at least one concrete example to answer the following questions: Are there “real punks” and “pretenders” in your particular office (among coworkers)? What are the criteria for these distinctions? Does your organization/company create products, settings, etc. that distinguishes “real punks” and “pretenders” in other locations (besides your immediate internship site)? How else do hierarchies matter in for your internship fieldsite?

**Week 7: Discrimination and Identity in the Work Place**

Choose one of the following readings and answer the corresponding prompt


**Written Assignment:** Summarize the reading. What does Schilt mean when she describes transmen as having an “outsider-within” perspective? Why does this make transmen interesting to study when examining workplace discrimination? What is the distinction between “open” and “stealth” transmen in Schilt’s research? Are there any groups or individuals in your workplace that might have an “outsider within” perspective to share, and, likewise, are there circumstances in which these individuals may experience discrimination? **Note:** if you find you are not given tasks you think you deserve because you are an intern, that is not the kind of discrimination she identifies via the concept “outsider-within” so think carefully about its application to your site.

(2) **Reading:** Pascoe, Cheri Jo. 2005. “‘Dude, you’re a fag’: Adolescent masculinity and the fag discourse.” *Sexualities* 8.3, 329-346.

**Written Assignment:** Summarize the reading. What is Pascoe’s main argument? How do adolescents use distancing or “othering” to affirm their own identities? How is this discourse racialized? Draw on your general knowledge of your site and at least one concrete example to answer the following questions. Using your experiences thus far, identify a strong instance of “othering” and social distancing to construct a preferred organization, company, group, or individual identity. What are the strategies to enforce this differentiation? [A good starting point is to ask what does the organization, company, group, or individual desire or want to be their identity? Preferred identities are established by contrasting what we are not, so another question to ask is what does the organization, company, group, or individual not want to be considered?]

**Week 8: Paper Proposal & Finding Outside Sources**

**Reading:** Citation Guidelines and References Search Documents

**Written Assignment:** Identify the two weekly assignments that you plan to use to guide your research paper and describe how the fieldwork you did for those assignments links to a larger topic of sociological inquiry. After identifying your research topic and shaping a research question for the final paper, create an annotated bibliography containing your three outside references. An annotated bibliography includes the proper citation of the book/article and a 1-2 paragraph summary of the author’s specific argument. Do not simply cut and paste the abstract. In the manner we have done throughout the quarter, how does each of these three outside articles relate to your internship field site? **Please bring a hard copy of your three outside sources to your 4th or 5th meeting with your coordinator.** As you read through the
ethnographies assigned for the class, think about how you may want to structure your final paper. We strongly encourage you to model your own paper after one of them.

**Week 9: Quoting**


**Written Assignment:** Interview one person at your internship site (the individual you choose is up to you, as is the topic, but please make sure the interview at least 15 minutes long). I do not want to see direct transcriptions or even a description of the interview. Mimicking the style of either Duneier or Willis, write an analysis on the topic of your choice incorporating some of the quotes from your interview. Notice that the authors employ quotes to identify and elaborate on something they find relevant to their analysis of the field site. Data from your interview should appear in your mini-ethnography. **You will need to record your interview to ensure that your quotes are accurate.**

**Week 10: Final Papers**

**Written Assignment:** Complete and turn in your mini-ethnography via the course website by 5pm, Friday of week 10. For every 24-hour period that your paper is late, your (paper) grade will be deducted by one-third of a letter grade (that means that if you upload your paper at 5:10pm on Friday, you will lose 1/3 of a letter grade).

All policies in the UCLA Catalog regarding academic dishonesty apply to 195CE internship courses, including policies regarding plagiarism. When warranted, infractions will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in disciplinary action and/or expulsion from the university. UCLA's complete policy regarding academic dishonesty can be found at the following website: http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/

The Center for Community Learning makes every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. If you wish to request an accommodation, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, 310.825.1501 or 310.206.6083 (telephone device for the deaf). Website: www.osd.ucla.edu Students should also notify the internship coordinator about any disability issues at the start of the quarter so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged and coordinated with the OSD well in advance of course assignments and due dates.

**Grading Scale**

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**NOTE:** Students taking the course on a Pass / No Pass basis must earn a C or better (73%) OVERALL in order earn a grade of Pass in the course. Additionally, be advised that your internship will be notified at any point in the quarter if you are in danger of not passing this course—regardless of whether you are taking the course for a letter grade or Pass / No Pass. You should also know that regardless of student performance, all site supervisors are contacted at least twice during the term for mandatory check-ins.