

LONGER DESCRIPTION FOR URBAN STUDIES

URBS/PLSI Internship: 603 (3 units) and 604 (1 unit)

THE INTERNSHIP

The internship is a core course required of all Urban Studies majors. It is designed and intended to provide students the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience in their professional area(s) of interest.

PURPOSE

The internship supplements the academic curriculum. It allows students to apply and test their urban studies classroom knowledge in a real world work setting, and hone their professional skills. By gaining actual work experience in their respective areas of interest as well as by building contacts with established professionals in those areas, students are able to clarify their career choices and professional goals better, and enhance their employment prospects.

Thus, through the internship students develop their knowledge, skills, and contacts, all of which are critical for their future careers. It offers students a taste of the nature of work in a field/organization of their choice, and the critical experience to improve existing skills and learn new ones. Besides their professional development, students also benefit from expanding their network of professional contacts, gaining access to their desired areas of work, and obtaining recommendations from relevant people in their chosen fields.

TIMING AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

A student is advised to do the internship relatively late in the program, after s/he has acquired enough skills through coursework to become desirable in terms of job qualifications. The placement process begins in the semester immediately **before** the one in which the student decides to do the internship. All interested students must attend a mandatory informational meeting, which also takes place in the semester **before** the actual internship. Dates for these meetings are posted on the URBS/PLSI websites, and as announcements in the URBS/PLSI administrative offices. Fall meetings are held in mid-November. Spring meetings are held in mid-April. At the informational meeting, faculty will guide students on how to begin the process of identifying potential internship placements with a template that has been designed to facilitate this process.

PLACEMENT IDENTIFICATION

Students are expected to devote sufficient time to identifying potential placements and submitting applications. Final placements must be approved by a faculty member who will be teaching the internship course that semester. Over the years, the Urban Studies and Political Science Departments have developed contacts and acquired information about numerous public, non-profit, and private agencies, and other organizations and firms suited to provide students with excellent internship opportunities. We have cataloged this information in a handbook that is available to

Urban Studies and Political Science students in the administrative office. Students are also encouraged to use the internet and other campus resources to locate more potential placements.

COURSE CREDIT AND REQUIREMENTS

The internship is part of the academic curriculum. It is intended to supplement the "theoretical" components of the curriculum and classroom learning with learning "in the field" and "from practical experience". Academic credit for the internship is awarded on the basis of these latter, practice-based forms of learning. The course requirements include: (1) spending 12-15 hours a week in an approved internship for 12-15 weeks (the fieldwork component); and (2) enrollment in an internship seminar that meets every other week for 2 hours. Students should register for both 603 and 604. Instructor consent is required. The internship course is a designated CSL (community service learning) course, which means that the 3 units of fieldwork appear on the student's transcripts as community service.

For more information about the internship course contact Professor Raquel Rivera Pinderhughes at raquelrp@sfsu.edu, Professor Ashok Das at ashokdas@sfsu.edu, or Professor Graeme Boushey at gboushey@sfsu.edu.