

COMM 3313: INTERNSHIP IN THE COMMUNICATION AND RHETORICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Take your education to new heights!



What is a Communication and Rhetorical Studies Internship?

A Communication and Rhetorical Studies internship IS an opportunity to extend your education by learning and by applying previous learning in a field setting. A well developed and focused internship experience will help you...

- put what you have learned in the classroom about human communication into practice.
- explore a professional career path.
- acquire and develop new communication skills related to your professional goals.

A Communication and Rhetorical Studies internship IS NOT simply credit for work. In order to complete a Communication and Rhetorical Studies internship...

- you will participate in an professional internship sponsored by an approved agency; but you will also bring a learning focus to the experience by submitting regular journal entries to an internship instructor. These journal entries are expected to be substantive, demonstrating a clear understanding of theoretical principles learned in communication courses and an ability to connect those principles to lived experience, thereby demonstrating the academic usefulness of the experience.
- your professional internship experience cannot be associated with an organization in which you are **regularly** employed or in which you **regularly** participate as a paid or voluntary member; it should be a unique situation, specifically designed as a professional internship experience, allowing learning opportunities beyond your customary life experiences.
- your internship experience must involve duties with clearly apparent connections to the study and practice of human communication.

Standards for Participating

Students applying for a Communication and Rhetorical Studies internship must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A minimum of 12 semester credits earned in communication courses.
- A minimum 2.8 GPA for all communication courses taken.

In addition, internship candidates should possess an ability to work independently, have demonstrated ability to make connections between practical experience and theoretical principles, and sincerely desire to favorably represent the department and university to the larger community.

The Internship Process

1. **Read through this packet.** Be sure you fully understand the nature and expectations of an internship. Check your eligibility. Only students who can provide clear verification of their eligibility will be accepted into the program.
2. **Identify an internship opportunity.** There are a number of ways to identify a potential internship opportunity. One is to use your own connections with area businesses and industries. Another is to visit the Career Development Center and talk to the Employer Relations Coordinator there. You could also talk with the faculty in the Communication and Rhetorical Studies program. Regardless, it is important to understand that finding the internship opportunity is your responsibility. The department or university cannot simply provide a professional internship experience at your request.
3. **Identify and meet with an organizational sponsor.** This should be an individual in the organization who is in charge of the professional side of the internship and who will be in a position to observe, monitor, and evaluate your work in the organization. Keep the following things in mind for this meeting:
 - You want to reflect a positive image of yourself, the department, and the university. Be prepared and professional. Dress in a professional manner, be confident and attentive, and adjust to the sponsor's schedule and needs.
 - Your goal should be to discuss the appropriateness of the internship based on your qualifications, the organization's needs, and the potential for the experience to enhance your educational program. Be aware that you will need to work a total of at least 45 hours for the organization in order to receive academic credit.
 - It is likely you will be expected to bring a professional resume and cover letter for the position to this meeting. Contact the Career Development Center if you need help in preparing these documents.
 - Determine your specific responsibilities in the organization. The more clear you can be about what you will actually do, the easier it will be to make the case that the work is relevant to the study of human communication.
 - Have your sponsor complete and sign the *Sponsor Agreement* form included in this packet. Keep the signed form so it can be turned in to your internship instructor.
4. **Identify and meet with your internship instructor.** This person needs to be a regular faculty member in Communication and Rhetorical Studies. Approach someone who is familiar with your work and interests and whose own teaching and scholarly interests are most compatible with the goals of your internship. Your internship instructor will meet with you during the semester, clarify expectations, evaluate your journal submissions, and assign your final grade.

Once the faculty member has agreed to serve as internship instructor, you should meet and do the following:

- Bring the completed *Sponsor Agreement* form. In addition, bring an official current transcript(s) for proof of eligibility.
- Discuss expectations about meeting times and standards for journal entries (i.e., number, length, format, evaluation criteria, etc.).
- Ask your internship instructor to arrange to contact the registrar so that you will not be blocked when you register for the course.

Note: Be sure to accomplish the above before the last day to add classes for the semester (usually at the end of the second week of classes).

5. **Register for the course.** Register for COMM 3313. Be sure to register for the appropriate number of credits:
 - If you will be working a total of **45 to 90 hours** for the organization, you may register for **one** credit.
 - If you will be working a total of **90 to 135 hours**, you may register for **up to two** credits.
 - If you will be working a total of **135 or more hours**, you may register for **up to three** credits.
6. **Fulfill your professional and academic duties.** Most student internships are set up to align with college semester schedules. However, it is possible that you would begin professional internship duties slightly before signing up for internship credit. In that case, you would complete steps 1 through 4 above, begin professional internship duties, and then sign up for internship credit when the semester begins. Take your responsibilities seriously. Be professional and dependable. The quality of your work will reflect on you, the department, and the university. Remember, internship experiences can either open or close doors for you.

Fulfill your academic duties by completing journal entries and any other duties assigned by your internship instructor. Focus on making connections between your experiences as an intern and what you have learned about communication in the classroom. Keep in contact with your internship instructor, and make the most of the experience.
7. **Facilitate the completion of the Sponsor Evaluation.** At the end of your internship experience, provide your organizational sponsor with a copy of the *Sponsor Evaluation* form. At the same time, provide your sponsor a stamped envelope addressed to your internship instructor. Be sure you allow your sponsor time to complete the evaluation and to return it to your instructor by mail before semester grades are due. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "I" (incomplete) for your internship credits. The evaluation form needs to be returned by mail and directly from your internship sponsor for purposes of confidentiality.

Sponsor Agreement: Communication and Rhetorical Studies Internship

A student has come to you to discuss placement as an intern in your organization. This student is also interested in using the internship as an opportunity for earning academic credit in the Communication and Rhetorical Studies program at Idaho State University. If this is to take place, the student will need you to function in the role of Organizational Sponsor. The following are the primary responsibilities of the Organizational Sponsor:

- To regularly observe and monitor the intern's work in the organization.
- To seek to provide the intern with responsibilities that are valuable for his/her educational and career goals.
- To serve as a contact and source of information for Communication and Rhetorical Studies faculty members if necessary.
- To complete a brief intern evaluation form at the end of the internship.

If you agree to serve as Organizational Sponsor, please complete the following:

Your name: _____

Name of your organization: _____

Your position/title in the organization: _____

Your office address and phone: _____

Name of student intern: _____

Beginning date of internship: _____ Ending date of internship: _____

Average number of hours intern will work per week: _____

Approximate total number of hours intern will work during internship: _____

I agree to function as Organizational Sponsor for the student intern identified above. I can and will fulfill the associated responsibilities. The intern and I have met and discussed the specific organizational responsibilities associated with the internship. We have also discussed the intern's qualifications, educational and career goals, and the organization's needs. Based on this, it is my belief that the experience is well suited as part of the intern's educational program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sponsor Evaluation: Communication and Rhetorical Studies Internship

Thank you for agreeing to be an Organizational Sponsor. Your time and expertise has been tremendously valuable for your student intern. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following items regarding the intern's performance in your organization. Your feedback will help the Communication and Rhetorical Studies Department maintain a high-quality internship program.

This form will be seen by the faculty member who is directing the student's internship and is considered as part of the student's overall evaluation. Your responses will remain confidential and not shared with the student intern.

Your name: _____ Your signature: _____

Name of intern: _____

Date of evaluation: _____

Please respond to the following items by circling the appropriate number in the right column:

	Strongly agree			Strongly disagree	
1. In our initial contacts, this intern presented him/herself in a professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The intern has demonstrated an excellent attitude toward work and assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The intern's work has been of very high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The intern has been a good example of an effective communicator.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The intern has demonstrated real compatibility in working with others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. There have been observable improvements in the intern's performance during his/her time in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The intern shows real potential in this type of work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would be eager to have someone of similar qualities placed as an intern in my organization.	1	2	3	4	5

Please feel free to write additional comments or clarifications on the back of this form. Return the evaluation in the stamped and pre-addressed envelope provided by the intern. Thank you again for your service to the student, to the Communication and Rhetorical Studies Department, and to Idaho State University as an Organizational Sponsor.