PRATT INSTITUTE
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SCIENCE
LIS 698, Practicum/ Seminar
Course Syllabus
Fall 2015

Course Instructor: Dr. Tula Giannini, Dean & Professor, Pratt-SILS
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Course seminar sessions as follows:
Day: Tuesdays
Time: 3:00 to 5:20 pm
Place: Room 610
Office Hours: By appointment or after class

Seminar Schedule – dates, topics and activities:

1. September 8 - Introduction to the course: the practicum experience, making connections between theory research and practice, the digital world of work; student introductions, discussion of practicum sites, types of institution and nature of work.
2. October 13 - Project methodology – discussion of site research, developing a topic and identifying related issues. Each student presents on his/her site work, observations and reflections.
3. November 11 – Each student presents on the topic/issues selected for his/her project.
4. December 15 - Project presentations (2 sessions, 12:00-2:30/3:00-5:30)
Course Description
This 3-credit course features experiential hands-on learning and experience in cultural settings such as libraries, archives, museums, non-profits, publishing and information design firms. Students engage in professional-level work, while relating theory and research to practice. Importantly, the course is designed to bridge students to the professional world of work and to provide opportunities to apply and develop the knowledge and skills acquired through coursework in a real work setting. Completion of the following course elements are required: 1) 120 hours of fieldwork and research in a workplace setting selected by the student and related to his/her career goals, 2) maintain a journal of on-site hours, activities and reflections, 3) Attend four 2 1/2-hour seminar sessions (10 hours) and 4) Produce a practicum project drawn from on-site work and a project presentation at the final course session (20 hours) The course grade is based on the site-supervisor’s evaluation and the instructor’s assessment of the journal, practicum project and class participation. The Practicum/ Seminar is required for Advanced Certificate programs within the MSLIS in archives and in museum libraries.

Instructor's role:
Conduct four seminar sessions:
• Advise and mentor students and guide student projects
• Moderate seminar session discussion and activity
• Evaluate overall quality of student work as evidenced by seminar participation, journal entries, course project and presentation, and site supervisor evaluation.

Goals:
The Practicum course provides students work experience that prepares them to perform effectively in professional positions in the information field. It connects students to the real world of work and enable them to apply the learning gained in MSLIS coursework and to work effectively in the world of practice they will encounter after graduation.
Learning objectives:
• Students understand the role and importance of research and assessment to practice.
• Students learn to apply research and assessment to evaluate work, institutional effectiveness and meeting user needs.
• Students understand the concept of institutional culture and its relationship to work.
• Students learn to perform effectively in a professional work environment.
• Students learn to use communication, writing skills and digital skills in the workplace.
• Students understand workplace organization and chain of command and how to work within institutional structure.

Learning Outcomes:
• Demonstrate knowledge and skills learned in the Pratt-SILS program and apply them to a library or other information-providing work setting
• Understand and evaluate information needs of users [as relevant]
• Understand and evaluate roles and activities of supervisor and other employees
• Identify and analyze information activities in relation to the mission of the parent organization
• Design, manage, and carry out a project of value to both student and host site
• Explore and understand professional opportunities
• Demonstrate and reflect on one’s growth in confidence and competence in carrying out professional duties

Practicum Structure
The student and site supervisor work together to determine the practicum work schedule. Each student is required to complete a minimum of 120 hours of work fitted into the time-related work structure of the cooperating organization. To maximize continuity, the student is strongly encouraged to schedule more than a single day per week for the practicum, i.e., it is better to work two half days per week than one full day per week. Students rarely have problems with their placements but, should this occur, please contact the instructor early in the term to address the issue or arrange an alternative placement.

Practicum/ Seminar Hours - the practicum includes a total of 125 hours which includes:
• 100 hours of supervised observation and practice in a library or other information setting approved by the instructor.
• 10 hours of seminar classes (4 sessions).
• 15 hours of project research and writing.
The Seminar is designed as an interactive session based on full participation of students and is moderated by the instructor. It serves as a place and forum where students:

- Raise issues related to their work experience.
- Share ideas and experiences and discuss issues relevant to their career goals and work experience.
- Discuss and synthesize work experience relating it to students' course work
- Learn how to apply research, assessment and evaluation methods to their practicum experience and projects.
- Compare problems and common elements across various settings through class discussion.
- Discuss project topics and issues
- Gain insight into a rich variety of settings
- Present projects and gain student and instructor feedback

Assignments:
- Journal of practicum work: create an entry for each day you work on site. Record the date and number of hours worked - include a discussion of what you did, your observations and thoughts.
- Practicum project drawn from the student's experience and research on-site and readings.
- Presentation of project

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
<th>Due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal [record of practice] includes verification of site work</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing – hand-in with final project at the end of the semester – link journal to project menu</td>
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| **Project and project presentation**
  *Projects must be digital and online*  
  Project readings & sources | 40% | Project proposal due by 3rd seminar session  
  Project itself due at last class meeting.  
  Presentations take place on the 4th session. |
| Seminar participation | 10% | Attendance required at each of the four seminar sessions. |
| Site supervisor evaluation based on evaluation form  
  **Student Evaluation Form For Site Supervisors** | 40% | Due upon completion of the 120 hours |
**Seminars:** *Attendance at seminars is required.* Exceptions for good reason must be arranged with the instructor in advance. Participation in class discussion contributes to the final grade (10%), and students need to be present to participate. Please be on time. Unexcused absences and frequent lateness will affect the final grade.

**Journal (10%)**
One of the major benefits of doing a practicum is the opportunity to observe a workplace, participate in its activities, and reflect on the experience. The journal is a systematic record of these observations and reflections about the practicum experience. A journal entry should be made for each time the student works at the site. Each entry should note the number of hours worked that time, and a running count of the total hours accumulated to date. Work experiences described in the journal are discussed in seminar sessions.

**Topics for journal observation:**
The journal is a record of what is being learned, and should encompass the total practicum experience, including interpersonal and organizational issues as well as tasks performed. Journals will be evaluated on the basis of how well they describe and reflect upon such matters as the following:

- How student was introduced into the organization and what type of orientation.
- What happens - What takes place, including day-to-day routines and critical incidents
- Tasks - Major tasks and accomplishments that day
- Issues - Issues or problems that arise for the student or in the organization and how they get resolved
- Staffing - Staffing patterns or levels of staffing, and their effects on how work is done
- Physical environment - How physical layout, furniture, noise, temperature, light, etc. affect service or ability to carry out responsibilities
- Resources – Perceived adequacy of funding, its effect on collections, services, ability to carry out projects and duties
- Social climate - Interactions among workers; overall social climate (friendly, distant, etc.)
- Users - Types of users served; typical needs of patrons
- Staff/user interactions – Nature of contacts; frequency; content covered; pace or pressure
- Service philosophy – Perceived standards or orientation toward service
- Challenges - Particular challenges for this organization and how they are being met
- Management style - The management style practiced by mentors and others
- Quality of supervision received – Direction, training, feedback, access, and mentoring
- Meetings - What takes place at meetings the student is invited to attend
- Developmental progress - Development of skill and confidence in carrying out duties
- Explanations and hypotheses - Generally, why things seem to be the way they are
- Critical perspective - How things might be done differently or more effectively
- Self-evaluation – Strengths and weaknesses of work, communication and effectiveness
- Reflection – Making sense of the experience both ongoing, and at the end of the term

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**THE PROJECT**
The project is designed as a vehicle to connect theory, research and practice and shows students how to:
- Bring together their on-site learning experience, research, -
  - reflections, seminar learning, discussion and activity
- Think critically about their work
- Apply and understand the need for research and evaluation in the workplace
- Use individual voice and do original work

**Selecting a project topic/ subject:** Identify a topic based on your practicum work. Bring focus to a specific aspect that has emerged as significant drawing upon you experiences and interactions at your site through work, observation, conversation, etc. The literature review will allow you to gain broader and more general perspectives on your topic and to contextualize it within professional practice. **The project must be created in a digital form using for example WordPress or Google.**

**Here you will find helpful project information and resources:**
http://mysite.pratt.edu/~giannini/practicumproject.html
PROJECT ELEMENTS: the project should include:

1. **Project Identification Sheet**: each student must submit a project identification sheet which includes the following:
   a. Student’s name, course title, instructor
   b. Site location name
   c. Site supervisor's name and title
   d. Project title
   e. Project abstract – one paragraph
   f. Illustration (photo, drawing, etc.) related to your site.

2. **Literature review**: this should consist of several current articles related to your topic. For each article include full citation and one paragraph on article perspectives specific to your topic - thus, not an abstract of the whole article - not the published abstract.

3. **Nature of work**: a sampling of your practicum work on site including a page of discussion on the nature of the work, etc.

4. **Digital Observations and Perspectives**: Discuss how digital technology and tools are being used in your work and across your institution; how are these related. About one page. (If your work is for example concerned with physical housing of collections, discuss the relationship of that to other activities that are digital, such as EAD inventory, metadata, etc.

5. **Analysis and evaluation**: write several pages on your topic that includes elements of critical analysis and research. This is in essence a research paper based on your site work and literature review. This include:
   a. **Critical analysis**: this demonstrates your ability to analyze and think about what you are doing and thus go beyond the descriptive to discussion that shows how you think about and have evaluated your work environment and experience.
   b. **Research**: use observation, interviews, discussion, anecdotal evidence, data collection (statistics, policies, other pertinent documents), comparison to other similar sites that you have experienced and draw on your literature review.
**Project Presentation:** (15 minutes) The final seminar session(s) are devoted to student presentations. Show and discuss the work that you have been doing on site and discuss the focus of your project including issues that you addressed. This can take a number of forms depending on the nature of your work. Use PowerPoint, some other e-presentation format or your online project.

- **Students must sign up for a presentation time.** Sign up sheets will be available in the SILS office.

**Course Grade:** In order to receive a course grade, students must have completed and submitted the following and presented their project at the final seminar session(s).

1. Journal (link the journal to your project menu/index),
2. Project (must include all elements)
3. Site-supervisor evaluation (must be signed and dated)
4. Project Presentation

**Resources and readings for practicum project and discussion**

See: [http://pratt.edu/~infosils/practicumproject.html](http://pratt.edu/~infosils/practicumproject.html)

**Student agreement:** Enrollment in this course signifies that the student agrees to abide by and adhere to the policies and regulations specified above and held by Pratt Institute. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this Syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the class.