

**STUDENT PRACTICUM SYLLABUS – Spring 2009
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20064**

**PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR/COORDINATOR: Beverly Lammay, M.Ed., MSLS
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: LSC 906: Practicum 3 Credits

This course will reflect the supervised professional training in a library, archive, or other library/information service agency approved by the faculty of the School of Library and Information Science with a minimum of 120 hours per semester. Written goals & objectives, Blackboard discussions, and both student and supervisor evaluation of the practicum experience are required. Requests for practicum should be made toward the end of the preceding semester to allow sufficient time to make arrangements. Graded Pass/Fail. Prerequisites: 551, 553, 555 and permission of Practicum Coordinator.

TEXT: Various readings as assigned through Blackboard discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

The SLIS MSLS program develops graduates who:

1. Demonstrate skill in organizing, disseminating, managing, preserving information;
2. Demonstrate skill in the use of information technologies and articulate the role of information technology in facilitating information management;
3. Demonstrate a commitment to the philosophy, principles, and legal and ethical responsibilities of the field;
4. Serve information seekers in a global society;
5. Exhibit an understanding of education and service as integral to the role of the information professional in society;
6. Interpret and apply research results from library and information science and related fields;
7. Articulate the economic, political, cultural, and social importance of the information profession;
8. Demonstrate a dedication to professional growth, continuous learning, and applying new knowledge to improve information systems and services to meet the needs of information users in society.

As a culminating experience, the practicum course should provide the opportunity for students to synthesize the information that has been presented in academic

coursework and be able to apply this information and the resulting skills to their practicum positions.

Congratulations! You are beginning a very exciting and worthwhile part of your library science preparation program. Students have often described their practicum experience as one of the most valuable learning opportunities that they had to prepare them for their future library positions.

Please remember – you are representing Catholic University and our School of Library and Information Science at your work site. You are expected to maintain a professional appearance, attitude, and work ethic while you are there. Site supervisors have made a commitment to assist our university in providing a meaningful field experience for a period of time. Our role is to follow their direction and leadership in completing the agreed-upon tasks, and learn from them as much as we can.

As practicum coordinator, it is my responsibility to assist students in setting up their work experiences, to coordinate the tasks and activities with the on-site supervisor, to visit students at their work site, to facilitate Blackboard discussions, to monitor and evaluate student work journals, to evaluate final summary reports, and to issue final grades of “Pass” or “Fail.”

Please make a note of the dates on our schedule for the **Spring 2009** semester activities listed below, and let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the information.

Beginning of the Practicum

January 12 or the first day of your practicum – Your daily journal should begin the first day you arrive at work. This should be kept as a daily log with narrative comments prepared as a Word file with dated entries. Students should include **brief** notes about daily tasks, software used, online resources used, any training that your supervisor had to do, knowledge you acquired, special problems or challenges that you had, etc. **These journal notes will be expected to be posted weekly to the Discussion Board of Blackboard**, as well as shared with me during my site visit. Students who have begun their practicum work prior to January 12 can post multiple weeks in the January 12 weekly slot. The entire journal will be submitted at the end of the semester as a Word document, and will become the foundation of your end-of-course assignment as you develop your final summary to be e-mailed to me for satisfactory completion of the course. A sample journal entry is given below.

9/3: Formulated initial project strategy. 1) Develop list of CAPs from *The Ivan R. Dee Guide to Plays and Playwrights* (2004), added names from *Twentieth-century American Dramatists. Fourth series* (2002), *Critical Survey of Drama* (1994), and *Contemporary Dramatists* (1982) from ODU's reference collections. 2) Obtain current syllabae from ODU's Theater Arts department for additions to CAP list. 3) Review syllabae from similar institutions with theatre arts departments -- whose plays are they using/teaching? 4) Compare ODU holdings to

holdings at similar institutions. Developed simple ranking strategy for "importance" or "prominence" based on frequency and number of items held, awards given, and usage in undergraduate and graduate coursework.

Began preparation of a spreadsheet listing each dramatist meeting the determined definition. Began review of ODU Library's catalog for current holdings. Searched catalog using advanced Boolean for keyword.

Used playwright's first and last names as terms, in order to get return including "works about," "works authored by" and "works including plays of."

Requested current syllabae from ODU's Theater Department (not online).

Used with permission of Michael Bell, Fall 2004

Two weeks after starting your practicum or no later than Monday, January 26, 2009 - Please send either in the body of the e-mail or as a Word attachment updated information as outlined below. This information is critically important as I develop information to discuss with the site supervisors and my visitation schedule.

1. **The name and location (specific address) of your practicum** (I need to verify the information that you originally submitted on your Practicum Application.)
2. **Name, title, and work schedule of your supervisor** (what hours can he/she be reached; work schedule – days, times)
3. **Term of your practicum (beginning and estimated ending dates)**
4. **Tentative schedule of work to be completed - (weekly schedule – days; times, # of hours)**
5. **Statement of practicum objectives and anticipated activities/tasks** – be as specific as you can. Most likely this will be a more complete overview than what many of you put on your applications; some of you will only need to copy and paste the information on your application. This information will serve as my evaluation standard to ensure that you have completed or experienced the various tasks that are listed.
6. **Best time (day of week, hours of the day) for me to make a visit.** With the number of students that I have this semester, I will need to develop a visitation schedule immediately. Remember, you and your supervisor will need to be on-site when I come. Once I have this information from everyone, I will set up a tentative schedule for your site supervisor's and your approval.
7. Please **verify the contact information (phone numbers with area codes and email addresses) of you and your supervisor** that was included in your application. Communication is critically important in this process since you have no on-campus class connection. Please check your email frequently for updates from me. Your possible Blackboard participation will be referenced later in this document. Thanks so much for your cooperation with this!

Throughout the Practicum

You will enjoy the opportunity to become part of a library information team. Learn all that you can from your mentors and other professional colleagues whom you encounter. Students have shared their excitement and enthusiasm for working with such wonderful experts in their fields, and have enjoyed the opportunity to apply what they have learned in classes to their work. Many students have been very successful in capitalizing on this work experience and have used their network of new contacts to get their first full-time job. Take advantage of your site's professional organizational and leadership team. These networking opportunities that a practicum provides for our students become invaluable resources as graduates look for full-time professional library positions.

Blackboard Discussions

We will have a Blackboard presence on the web with Discussion Boards about current library information issues that you are experiencing in your positions. Various readings will be assigned for Blackboard discussions. Students will be expected to post their thoughts regarding these current topics based on their work experiences at the site. Failure to post comments will adversely affect the final grade. Reading deadlines will be as follows: Sunday, February 15, March 15, and April 12.

Students will also be expected to post their weekly journal entries no later than 12:00 p.m. midnight on Sunday of each week. Failure to post journal entries will also adversely affect the final grade. Additional details regarding posting requirements may be sent to you through email.

Midterm of the Practicum

By Friday, February 20 All site visits must have been scheduled with supervisors & students.

Your assistance in coordinating the scheduling for my site visit is very important. You are in a much better position than the practicum coordinator to recognize what times would be more convenient for your site supervisor and for your workflow to be interrupted. Start early in the planning for these visits – many times with summer vacations and other commitments, it becomes a juggling act to work out visitation dates.

Most visits have lasted about an hour to an hour and a half. Typically, my agenda for the visit is as follows:

1. Get an overview of the library or information site – who does the library serve? What kind of collection is there? What kind of staff is employed?
2. Find out how you have fit into their information team. Let me hear about the specific tasks and activities that you have been doing or any special projects that you have been working on.

3. Ask for suggestions or recommendations that either of you have for the Practicum process that will help to improve the program.
4. Remind students and supervisors about the deadline for the student summary and the supervisor's evaluation.
5. Discuss any problems, questions or concerns.

Completion of the Practicum

Due Friday, May 8 - Upon the completion of the practicum, all students will have completed their weekly work log postings to Blackboard, and will have participated in at least one of the discussion forums in Blackboard.

Students will also be required to turn in their two-page, single spaced final summary to the Practicum Coordinator. Any students who will be graduating in May who need to complete this summary prior to this date need to notify me. This report can be sent as a Word attachment through e-mail. This report should include, but not be limited to, the following information and should be based on students' work journals.

- **Introduction** - Identify and describe your work location indicating the type of work that the library is involved in and how your practicum work was a part of that.
- **Work description** - Tell me about the tasks that you were asked to perform throughout the work experience. Did you work on a specific project or was your work more varied, moving around from department to department? Was your work part of an ongoing project or were you able to see closure to your work? What products or services did you produce or provide?
- **Work challenges and rewards** - Describe what you felt was the most challenging aspect of your work (something that you had to learn, problems that you had to solve, and/or knowledge that you had to acquire). Also describe what you felt was the most satisfying and professionally rewarding part of your work. Would you be interested in doing this type of work as your first job? Did you feel that even though this was what you thought you wanted to do, have you now found your area of interest in another aspect of librarianship?
- **Job preparation** - What preparation did you have for this job? What courses or readings gave you the best background for working in this environment? What information or knowledge did you not have that you felt would have been helpful?
- **Future outlook** - How do you see this library operation changing and evolving in the future based on your brief work experience there?
- **Final comments** - Share your personal thoughts about the experience - what you liked, didn't like, what surprised you, what disappointed you, any new

insights that you have into your chosen profession. Let me know any suggestions that you have for the practicum - how can we improve the process for future students?

Due Friday, May 8 – All site supervisors will be asked to complete a two-page evaluation and survey, and then send these to me by e-mail by this date. Be sure that you speak with your supervisor well in advance of this date. The evaluation form and survey reminder will be e-mailed to all supervisors **by Friday, April 24.**

Grades for the Practicum

Final evaluation of the practicum experience will be based on the students' journal entries, Blackboard discussions, final summary report, and the evaluation forms from the practicum supervisor. Grades are pass/fail.

I know that you will greatly enjoy this "course." Your supervisors will also receive a copy of this document so that they will have an idea of our expectations for you during this practicum.

Please contact me immediately if you have any questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to visiting each of you at your sites!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, January 12 (Or whenever you begin)	Beginning of student journal, documenting daily activities
Monday, January 26	Updated information sent to Practicum Coordinator
Sunday, February 15	Blackboard reading discussion due
Friday, February 20	Site visit by practicum coordinator scheduled
Sunday, March 15	Blackboard reading discussion due
Sunday, April 12	Blackboard reading discussion due
Friday, April 24	Reminders sent Final evaluation form emailed to site supervisors Final evaluation form copied to students
Friday, May 8	Final two-page summary, journal, BB discussion by student and final evaluation by the site supervisor due to practicum coordinator
Monday, May 11, noon	All final grades posted to Cardinal