



**American University
European Union Program
Fall 2012**

**SYLLABUS
BRUSSELS INTERNSHIP
(SIS-310-009S)**

The internship combines academic learning with exposure to a professional environment. It is intended to complement the other European Union in Action Program courses by teaching you how a professional environment operates in the context of the European Union, NATO and the other international organizations located in Brussels. Through the internship, you should be able apply lessons that you learn in your course work to “real world” situations. You also gain insights into aspects of European life and culture that are not normally observable in your other class work and homestays. Finally, the internship will give you the opportunity to learn more about a particular career path, to sort out your career interests and goals, to develop new skills and to sharpen your existing skills.

Course Structure

The internship is an experiential learning course. Although periodic discussions about the internship will be held, the course does not have a regular meeting time, lectures, examinations, textbooks, or any of the other trappings of a typical seminar course. For that reason, some students mistakenly believe that an internship provides academic credit for work experience. This is not true. An internship is **NOT** a work experience. It is an academic experience, not a work experience. You will not receive academic credit for simply showing up at the internship and doing tasks that your supervisor asks you to do. Instead, you will receive academic credit on the basis of what you have learned, as measured by your completion of the Course Requirements described below.

In an internship, learning takes place on the internship supervisor’s premises. Each learning environment is unique and you must structure your learning process according to the specific circumstances of your internship. Unlike every other academic experience you have had, no one will tell you what it is that you are supposed to be learning. You not only have to learn to give the right answers, you also must learn to ask the right questions. Your internship assignments are designed to help you structure your learning process. Dr. Sheridan and the Internship Coordinator are always available to talk to if you need help in managing that process. However, only you can make the internship a learning experience.

Internship Placement Process

The internship program will begin during orientation when Dr. Sheridan and the Internship Coordinator will explain the internship program to your class. You will then have an individual consultation with the Internship Coordinator. During this consultation, you will be provided with internship contacts that are relevant for you, based upon the internship skills/survey form that you filled out before coming on the program. (Your responses on this form were used to match your skills and interests with the needs of the internship organizations with which our program has a relationship.) In some cases, you will already have interviews arranged. In other cases, you will have to contact the potential internship supervisors to arrange a meeting or you will have to work more closely with the Internship Coordinator to find internship interviews.

Remember that the role of the Internship Coordinator is to facilitate your search for an internship, not to secure one for you. The responsibility for securing an internship rests solely with you. You must actively engage yourself in the internship search process and you are expected to consult with the Internship Coordinator about your progress. If you would like to contact organizations on your own, you may do so. However, you must check with the Internship Coordinator beforehand to ensure that the university has not already contacted this organization.

Once your internship interviews are arranged, the next step in the process is for you to prepare for your interview(s). You will need to bring a few copies of your **resume** that outlines what you have to offer an organization, and if at all possible, have copies of a **writing sample** ready in case the interviewer asks for it. In some cases, you may need a writing sample in French as well. You may not miss our seminar classes to go on an internship interview.

You may be very busy during the first few weeks of the semester in your efforts to secure a position, but the experience varies widely from student to student. Some students may have several interviews with places where the university has placed interns before. Other students may have more unique skills and interests that will require them to do a great deal of independent searching for an internship. Some students receive an offer for an internship immediately in a position that is ideally suited to them. Others might take a few days to secure an appropriate internship. In any of these events, be patient and remember that you may have to change your expectations of what an internship is all about. It is a learning experience. It is not a work experience. An internship possibility that you had not before considered may satisfy your learning goals better than the internship you at first thought you wanted.

Ideally, you should have secured an internship by the end of the second week and you should begin the internship by Tuesday, 11 September. However, this is not a deadline and it may take some students more time to find the right internship. The Thursday of your first week at the internship, you are to submit a "Volunteer Service Agreement" to the Director. That form is to be signed by you and your internship supervisor. Remember that this document commits you to stay with the organization for the duration of the semester.

Some of the tasks interns are invariably asked to do is somewhat menial in nature, involving things like photocopying, answering telephones, clipping newspapers and the like. Please keep in mind that this is unavoidable and that it is the same task that a Member of the European Parliament or another professional in a small office would have to do if you were not there. However, your internship supervisors are asked to ensure that no more than 40 percent of your time is devoted to tasks of a clerical nature.

For the remainder of the semester, you are expected to be at the internship no more than two days per week for a total of about 16 hours per week. Although you may wish to put in more time than that, that decision is strictly yours and may not come at the expense of your regularly scheduled classes. If one day you are sick and are unable to go to the internship, **you must** call your supervisor that morning and inform them that you will not be in and why. Similarly, you must keep your supervisor informed of any schedule changes that affect the internship and inform them of the days you cannot attend the internship because of Fall Break (the week of 29 October) and the excursion to Central and Eastern Europe (the week of 19 November) in advance of these absences. Never leave your supervisor with the impression that you will be present at your internship if you know that you are not going to be there.

Course Requirements

Remember that your internship is an academic experience. You are not employed by your internship supervisor. You are studying in your supervisor's office with your supervisor's assistance. So, your final grade for the Brussels Semester Internship will be determined on the basis of the following:

- 1) **Supervisor's Evaluation:** Toward the end of the semester, the program will ask your internship supervisor to evaluate your internship performance and learning. The Brussels Center sends the form for this evaluation directly to the supervisor. We treat this form as confidential and we do not share the supervisor's evaluation with you or with anyone else. If you would like to know your supervisor's evaluation of your performance, we strongly encourage you to ask your supervisor if he or she will meet with you to discuss your performance at the end of the semester.
- 2) **Learning Contract:** At the beginning of the internship, you will develop a Learning Contract and use it to monitor your progress throughout the semester. The exact assignment for the Learning Contract follows this syllabus. The learning contract itself is due on **the Monday before the third week of your internship**. You are encouraged to review your contract to ensure that the internship is meeting your goals during the week of 9 October. Your final learning contract examination will occur on **Tuesday 11 December**. (See the Internship Learning Contract Assignment included with this syllabus.)

- 3) **Internship Paper:** Choose and research one issue, topic or theory that is relevant for your internship experience. In your research, you are required to draw upon the academic literature, your course work, and your what you have learned from your internship experience to provide you with a framework for understanding the topic. You are also required to interview at least one person in your internship organization about this topic. Then, write a eight to ten page paper about this issue. Just to be clear, this is a paper about an issue, topic or theory. It is not a paper about your internship organization. It should contain a topic sentence or thesis. It should present arguments in support of your thesis. It should explain and critique the arguments against your thesis. You are free to choose any specific issue, topic, or theory that you wish, provided that it in some way relates your learning at the internship with your learning in any of your classes. The paper is due on **Wednesday 14 November**. It is to be sent by e-mail to Professor Sheridan in either Microsoft Word format or Apple's Pages format. The e-mail address is aub@aub.be. *Remember that it is in your own best interest to complete your research for this paper before you leave for Fall Break!*

These three elements will be weighted in your final grade for the Internship in the following manner:

Supervisor's Evaluation.....	40 percent
Learning Contract.....	10 percent
Internship Paper.....	50 percent



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INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT

The internship is an experiential learning course. Unlike normal college lecture courses that you are accustomed to, no one will tell you what you should be learning at your internship. Indeed, the lessons that each student will learn will differ, depending upon each students' interests. Thus, the objectives of this learning contract are as follows:

- 1) To make your learning process more active, conscious and productive.
- 2) To make you decide what you intend to learn and accomplish from the experience.
- 3) To develop an understanding between you and your internship supervisor about your mutual intentions and expectations of the internship.
- 4) To develop a set of criteria and techniques for evaluating your internship experience.

The following are your instructions for developing and implementing your internship learning contract:

Step I: The Interview Weeks

During your interview weeks, think about why you want an internship. Write down on a sheet of paper what you want to learn or achieve. Be as specific and detailed as possible. For example, "I want to learn about EU politics" is not as clear and focused as "I want to learn how businesses lobby the EU: which individuals they target and how they can influence those individuals." Prioritize these learning goals, and think about how you will be able to measure your progress in achieving them.

Step II: The First Week at the Internship

Use your first week on the job to get to learn more about the organization, its activities, and the role that you as an intern will play in the organization. With this background, think about how well (or not) your current internship responsibilities will fulfill your objectives. You should also think about what additional internship activities you think you could do that would help you meet your learning objectives. Make sure to arrange an appointment with your supervisor for next week to review the proposed learning contract. At the end of this week, create a first draft of the learning contract, according to the format on page 27.

Step III: Finalizing the Learning Contract

Meet with your supervisor to discuss your learning contract. Show your supervisor your draft of the learning contract. Discuss how realistic your objectives are and the possibilities of creating other activities to meet your objectives, if needed. In light of this discussion, prepare a formal final version of your learning contract and sign the learning contract. Submit the contract to Professor Sheridan on the **Monday before you begin your third week at the internship.**

Step IV: Mid-semester Progress Review

Midway through the semester, look at your Internship Learning Contract again and review your goals. Are you making progress toward your learning objectives? If so, why? If not, why not? What efforts are you making to achieve your learning objectives? Do you need to change your activities to meet more objectives? Do you still want to learn those objectives? Have you developed new objectives or decided to delete other objectives? Have you discussed your progress toward learning objectives with your supervisor?

Step V: Final Evaluation

On **Tuesday 11 December**, you will take an individual oral examination with Professor Sheridan. This examination will cover the following topics:

- a) Your Initial Objectives: Did you meet your initial objectives? If so, why? If not, why not? What efforts did you make to fulfill your learning objectives? What could you have done differently? Were your initial objectives realistic?
- b) Your New Objectives: Did your learning objectives change over the course of the internship? If so, why? Did you develop new objectives that you did not consider at the beginning of the internship? Did you achieve these new objectives and why?
- c) Your Learning: What did you learn from this internship experience? After you leave Brussels, how do you intend to use what you learned at the internship?

This is an examination. Prepare answers to these questions in advance, anticipate follow-up questions from Professor Sheridan, and remember that you are graded according to your performance.

**FORMAT FOR THE
INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT**

INTERN: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

List in order of priority your goals for your internship and what you wish to accomplish.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Describe in as much detail as possible your role and responsibilities in the organization in order of priority. List your duties, projects, deadlines, etc.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Discuss what you will learn from your responsibilities that were originally not part of your learning objectives.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Describe how you intend to meet your learning objectives. In doing so, discuss how the activities you will be doing both on and off the job that will enhance your learning on the job.

SUPERVISION

Describe the supervision you will be provided on the job. What kind of instruction, assistance, consultation, etc. you will receive and from whom?

EVALUATION

Describe how you will evaluate whether or not you have met your learning objectives. Describe the criteria you think the supervisor should use to evaluate you.

PLEDGE

I promise that I will make every effort to meet the learning objectives that I have set for myself at this internship.

Your Signature

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT

INTERN: Jane Louise Doe

ORGANIZATION: My Association (MA)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) To learn how a professional office environment functions.
- 2) To improve my communications skills, especially my ability to write and to conduct business telephone conversations.
- 3) To learn more about how my major in international affairs can be used in the world of business.
- 4) To make contacts with people who will help me get a job later on.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Assist in the overall smooth functioning of office operations by answering the telephone, writing correspondence, filing, acting as the receptionist when needed, taking notes in meetings, and other such duties.
- 2) Perform background research on legislative issues affecting MA under consideration in Parliament. Research involves consulting libraries, telephone inquiries, and field visits. Will report findings in a briefing paper to the supervisor by a pre-determined date.
- 3) Assist with maintaining library and database records on an as need basis. Tasks include clipping articles and filing in appropriate folders, entering cataloged information into a database, and locating resource materials as needed.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- 1) I can learn new office skills like library management and how to manipulate an Access Database.
- 2) My supervisor will take me to business luncheons and meetings with clients.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1) By assisting in the smooth functioning of the office, I will learn how a professional office environment functions.
- 2) By writing correspondence and making telephone calls I will improve my business communication skills.
- 3) By performing research on European Parliament legislative initiatives I will see how my Brussels Semester courses and SIS major are relevant to the business world.
- 4) By putting forward a professional face at the office, attending business luncheons and other functions, I will make contacts which should help me for the future.

SUPERVISION

My supervisor, Mr. Smith, will meet with me weekly to monitor the progress of my research and learn about the implications of my findings. I will receive instruction on what to do around the office from Ms. Jones, who will also give me a general orientation and assist me as needed in performing general office tasks.

EVALUATION

I will have met my learning objectives if:

- 1) I see improvement in my writing skills.
- 2) I gain greater self-confidence on the telephone and in business meetings.
- 3) I see one issue that I learned about in class have an impact on the business.
- 4) my supervisor offers to serve as a reference for me in the future.

My supervisor will give me an excellent evaluation if I arrive at the office when I am scheduled to arrive, do all assigned tasks punctually and cheerfully, show initiative and act professionally.

PLEDGE

I promise that I will make every effort to meet the learning objectives that I have set for myself at MA his semester.

Jane Louise Doe