JAMES MADISON COLLEGE

MC 400/401: Field Experience

Summer 2020

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OVERVIEW

The James Madison Field Experience program enables you to strengthen your liberal education in the social sciences and public affairs by engaging in experiential learning – accompanied by analytical reflection on such learning under faculty guidance. Students who take Field Experience gain work experience and skills, encounter opportunities to test academic knowledge in working environments, and increase their knowledge about potential careers. The College believes strongly in the value of combining liberal and practical education. The Field Experience provides you the opportunity to apply the knowledge you have learned in the classroom to a practical experience. While in the "experience" you continue learning, only in a less academically structured setting. Three points about your Field Experience are important:

1) **You must be active in the learning process**. Experiential learning is active learning and you will need to push yourself through the learning stages with which you are less comfortable. You may enjoy the activity of your internship, but you may have to discipline yourself to sit back and reflect on what you are doing in order to insure that you really learn from it, that you know what you are learning, and that what you learn includes what you want to learn;

2) **You, the learner, are the one who determines what you want to learn**. Internships enable you to create your own curriculum. You have to give your experience focus in order not to be overwhelmed by the amount and variety of data and phenomena to absorb. Your experience, your supervisor, your faculty reader, co-workers, other interns, etc. are learning resources to be tapped thoughtfully and carefully;

3) **You become more conscious of what you learn and how to learn it**. If you are engaged in active learning responsibility for what and how you learn, you will need to monitor it continually and evaluate the progress you make toward achieving your learning and accomplishing goals for your internship while you are on the job.

- **To view the Field Experience criteria, visit the JMC Field Experience Guide: jmc.msu.edu/feguide**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR MC 400 (5 - 9 credits)

All requirements for MC 400 are evaluated by the Field Experience Coordinator.

EVALUATION of MC 400: A Pass (P)/No Pass (N) grade will be determined by satisfactory completion of required written work and successful completion of the Field Experience. **A N grade in MC 400 *requires* re-enrollment for the course and completion of its related requirements.**

1. **Satisfactory Performance (in internship).** The time expectation for MC 400 (9 credits, full-time option) is 35-40 hours per week for 12-14 weeks. The time expectation for MC 400 (5 credits, part-time option) is 18-20 hours per week for 12-14 weeks. For other credit amounts, consult with the Field Experience Coordinator. The internship supervisor will be asked to evaluate the intern's performance near the end of the internship. To pass MC 400, the Field Experience Coordinator must find the intern's performance satisfactory based in part on the supervisor's evaluation. Therefore, know and follow these expectations:

- Be on time, be dependable, call in if you are sick. You are expected to be there every day, for the hours you have agreed upon. If you have a legitimate and appropriate reason to need some hours or a day off - ASK (don't tell) your supervisor well in advance.
- Dress appropriately and professionally.
- Be polite and considerate - you are there to learn - from your supervisor and co-workers.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- If you have difficulties with your Field Experience talk with your supervisor right away and contact the Field Experience Coordinator. Problems can be resolved if we work on them together.

2. **Learning Contract.** The Learning Contract is essential in developing a mutual understanding and agreement between intern and supervisor about the responsibilities, supervision, and evaluation of your internship. Complete the learning contract ***in consultation*** with your internship supervisor. Submit in-person or via mail, fax, or e-mail to the Field Experience Office.

3. **Reflection Assignment (CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THREE OPTIONS: A, B, or C).** Whichever one you choose must be submitted ELECTRONICALLY to the Field Experience Office (jmcfeo@msu.edu) by the due date(s). The assignment will be reviewed and graded (P/N) by the Field Experience Coordinator. Assignments should be double-spaced and written in Times New Roman size 12 or Calibri size 11 font.

A. Critical Incident Journal. The journal should include a **minimum of 14 one-page entries**. These are based on the number of weeks in the experience but aren't rigidly assigned to 1 per week. See the Critical Incident Journal Technique Sheet for clarification on how to do a critical incident journal. Remember - this is NOT a chronological list of what you did every week. The critical incident journal is a tool to help you analyze significant occurrences to you professionally and personally. So basically, describe the incident (not factual information) and analyze what you learned. At the end of the internship, compile your entries into a single electronic document, and submit as an e-mail attachment.

B. Four Essays (related to the internship organization). To help understand the placement and its structure and function, the four essays together complete an organizational analysis. This requires careful thought, observation, and discussion with fellow interns, co-workers, and your supervisor. If possible, you are encouraged to interview your colleagues to better understand their roles in the office. **The page length for each essay may vary from 3 to 5 pages**, and each essay should address one of the following prompts:

1. Background, description, and mission - Describe the organization's origin; i.e. how and why it was established. Describe the organization's location and physical work environment. Describe the organization's mission and goals (what is it supposed to do and how). Why does the organization exist? How do the staff and supervisors perceive the role of the organization? Are they reflected in actual practice? Who are the clients/customers? Are they visible? How do they act? How has the organization changed over time? What is your interpretation of the background, goals, and mission of the organization? Analyze what you have learned in this area.
2. Organizational structure and operations - Describe and analyze the organization's structure. What are the formal and informal structures? Is there a difference between the formal workings of the organization and the informal lines of communication and influence? Draw an organizational chart. Who reports to whom and about what? Where do you and your supervisor fit in? Analyze the diversity in the organization. What are the backgrounds (e.g. age, education, training, race, gender) of co-workers? What are their responsibilities? Have there been any recent changes in the organization? Characterize the decision-making and leadership of the unit? Does this follow the formal organization or not? Does the structure reflect its mission and goals, how or how not? What other organizational units does it deal with and how? What is your interpretation of the structure and operation?
3. Funding and resource analysis - Describe and analyze the organization's resources (# of employees, funding sources, other resources - computers, office equipment, office supplies, space, etc.). How is the organization funded? Describe the funding process, proposals, grants, budgets, etc. How do the sources of funding affect policy in the organization? Be discrete with inquiries. Analyze the impact of resources within the organization.
4. Synthesis and reflection of experience - Final analysis of the organization and analysis of your role. Does the organization do what it is designed to do and does it do this in the way it professes. Are there discrepancies between the stated goals of the organization and the actual practices? Review the above three essays - what has changed in your earlier assessments between when first written and now. Describe your position, various tasks, and relationship between them. How are these related to the overall mission and goals of the organization? Review the mission and goals in relationship to the activities described in your Learning Contract.

C. Reflection Paper. This requires a **minimum 10 to 12-page paper** that reflects on and analyzes the Field Experience and its relationship to your learning objectives and personal/professional growth, overall JMC and University curriculum, or future plans and career goals.

4. Evaluations. Links to online evaluation forms will be sent to interns and to supervisors near the end of the internship. Complete and submit those promptly.

MC 400 Due Dates

Week of May 11, 2020	Begin Field Experience
May 25, 2020*	Complete and sign the **Learning Contract** and send to the Field Experience Office ***(*due approx. 1-2 weeks after start date)*.**
June 1, 2020	**Essay #1** from OPTION B due to FEO
June 22, 2020	**Essay #2** from OPTION B due to FEO
July 13, 2020	**Essay #3** from OPTION B due to FEO
August 3, 2020	**Essay #4** from OPTION B due to FEO
August 10, 2020	**Critical Incident Journal** from OPTION A due to FEO **Reflection Paper** from OPTION C due to FEO **Evaluations** due to FEO

While it is important to meet the deadlines for submitting your essays, a few days leeway is acceptable. If you have questions, please contact the FEO.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR MC 401 (3 credits)

All requirements for MC 401 are evaluated by the assigned faculty reader.

EVALUATION OF MC 401: A P/N grade is determined by satisfactory completion of a research paper **(minimum of 18-20 pages in length)** or substantial research project mutually agreed upon by the student and the faculty reader. Students receive an automatic extension for MC 401 into the semester following enrollment to ensure they have the duration of the internship to gather information and select a suitable research topic (see due dates below).
A N grade in MC 401 *requires* the student to re-enroll for the course and complete the research project.

Important Notes

1. **Discuss the Field Experience internship, the organization, and the potential direction of the project with the faculty reader prior to the beginning of the Field Experience. Discuss arrangements for continuing contact throughout the internship and the subsequent semester. This is extremely important.**

2. **Due dates:**
   a. **Meet with MC 401 reader, and return signed Student-Reader Planning Sheet to FE Office, *prior* to May 1, 2020**
   b. **1st draft of project – Monday, September 14, 2020**
   c. **Final Project – Monday, November 9, 2020**

THE MC 401 FIELD EXPERIENCE PROJECT

1. You must submit a draft or initial version of the MC 401 project by **September 14, 2020**, or before based on the deadlines set by the individual faculty reader. **Projects must be submitted ELECTRONICALLY, with copies both to your faculty reader AND to the Field Experience Office *(CC jmcfeo@msu.edu* on your submission).** You will be notified by your reader if revisions are required, and if so, of the due date for a revised draft. You should expect to revise the project. Guidelines are below.

2. The final version of the project is due by **Monday, November 9, 2020**.

3. The above deadlines are enforced, whether or not you are currently enrolled. In fact, Part II of the "Student-Reader Planning Sheet" asks the student to sign a statement acknowledging these deadlines and agreeing to abide by them**. The faculty reader is under no obligation to extend these deadlines or to continue to work with any student who fails to adhere to them.** A student's failure to meet these deadlines, then, is just as serious as failure to show up for a final exam.

4. Should the revised project still not be satisfactory, the faculty reader may decide to extend the deadline for additional revision. The faculty reader will inform the Field Experience Office of the new deadline.

5. FAILURE TO MEET THE DEADLINES WILL RESULT IN AN "N" (NO-CREDIT) GRADE FOR MC 401 AND WILL REQUIRE RE-ENROLLMENT IN MC 401 AND COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT IN ORDER TO GRADUATE FROM JAMES MADISON COLLEGE.

6. REMEMBER - 3 CREDITS FOR MC 401 WILL NOT BE AWARDED UNTIL THE PROJECT IS ACCEPTED BY THE FIELD EXPERIENCE FACULTY READER. PLANS TO GRADUATE, ATTEND GRADUATE OR LAW SCHOOL, AND SEEK EMPLOYMENT SHOULD TAKE THIS FACT INTO CONSIDERATION.

PLEASE NOTE – GRADUATION ELIGIBILITY:

Many students who do the Field Experience as the last remaining graduation requirement have questions about their graduation date – whether they will officially "graduate" in the semester in which they complete their Field Experience or in the semester during which they complete their project. The official university policy dictates that a student is considered a graduate in the semester in which all of the required work is submitted. Therefore, the student will be considered a graduate in the semester corresponding to the date on which the final version of the project was submitted. The final version is considered to be the one that is approved by the faculty reader and is determined after it has been approved.

PROJECT GUIDELINES

The Field Experience Project is a major research or analytic assignment. If students select to write a paper, it should be approximately **18-20 pages in length.** Alternatively, the faculty reader and the student can design a specific project relevant to the student's interests, the internship experience, and the organization. The project will draw on your enhanced understandings and knowledge derived from the Field Experience, but will ask you to go beyond the particulars of that experience in developing a relevant academic thesis.

You should work closely with your MC 401 faculty reader to identify and consider potential MC 401 research topics. For example, broad topics may include an analysis of a key problem of the organization, research on an issue related to the organization, or a topic agreed upon by the faculty reader and student. **The advice and counsel of your Madison faculty reader will play a key role in how you formulate and complete the project – communication before, during, and after the Field Experience is absolutely critical.**

The MC 400 assignment will be made available in electronic form to your MC 401 reader. The MC 401 project should thus not reiterate materials already covered by the MC 400 assignment.