JUSTICE STUDIES PRACTICUM

JUSTICE STUDIES 495, THREE SEMESTER CREDITS

Criminal Justice Internship

Dr. Gene T. Straughan

Office Hours M/W 1:30-2:30; T/TH 1:30-2:30

Lewis-Clark State College, Spalding Hall 211E (792-2821)

Web Page: www.lcsc.edu/gtstraughan  Email Address: gtstraughan@lcsc.edu
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The primary objective of this course is to provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to practical on the job experience with the criminal justice system. This required course involves students taking the initiative and selecting a site themselves or being recommended to a site by criminal justice faculty. There is some flexibility in what constitutes an appropriate internship site, but it should be connected with a field of study which would normally include law enforcement agencies, prisons, probation and parole offices, social service organizations, government agencies, department store security firms, research institutions or foundations, judicial, legal, or political offices, and homeland security or emergency management organizations. Internships must be approved by the course instructor and manager of the criminal justice agency. The course is designed to provide practical on-the-job experiences which augment in-class experiences. The internship is NOT designed to be a substitute for ordinary or elective coursework. Students are required to put in 45 hours per credit with 135 hours needed to satisfy the three credit class requirement. The best internships are planned well in advance. By focusing on these general areas, the course will provide students with an opportunity to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To acquire an understanding of the activities, practices, laws and policies pertaining to the type of work the agency does;
2. To understand the daily operations of the agency;
3. To examine the historical evolution of the agency;
4. To analyze, synthesize, and generalize about the agency and what was learned in classes;
5. To articulate an assessment of performance at the agency and skill levels required;
6. To articulate a self-assessment of whether the agency or line of work is a desirable career; and
7. To appreciate the complexities of a criminal justice organization.

COURSE EVALUATION: Students are required to meet with the instructor to select an appropriate agency site and then arrange an internship with a criminal justice agency. Students must keep a daily log book of hours and activities and write a final report covering the nature of their practicum and how their activities connected to previous classroom experiences. This allows students to share and document experiences, evaluate reasons for selecting criminal justice as a major, express sentiments such as enjoyment, concerns, confusion, doubts, and frustration, monitor one's own professional development, integrate classroom concepts with field experiences in criminal justice, express sensitivity toward individuals whose backgrounds are different from one's own, and evaluate new experiences, frustrations, problems, and agency policies and procedures. The journal and final report is due at the end of the semester.