MRPE 9700Y · Internship

Fall and Winter Terms
The University of Western Ontario

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MRPE Program

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Course Description

The internship course will be held bi-weekly through the fall and winter terms, providing hands-on experience for the professional development of students. Students in this program are trained to conduct social science research for practical applications in various settings, including government, not-for-profit, and private sectors. Thus, in addition to training in research and communication skills provided in other courses, students in this course will be provided with professional skills for various workplaces.

The course is organized around the following topics:

1. *Introduction:* **What's the job about?**
   We start by discussing what skills our graduates can offer and what types of jobs are available for researchers in various sectors outside academia. Students analyze job postings for relevant positions to understand the job market's expectations. We also run an activity around skills to determine assets and gaps to let students identify differences between their current profile and the characteristics requested by employers.

2. *Resume and cover letter*
   Students examine examples of successful resumes and cover letters (from previous cohorts and models from the internet) to upgrade theirs. While a cover letter is usually tailored to the specific job the student is applying for, it is possible to design a

standardized letter to adapt case by case, which will save time during the application period and become a template ready to be used for future job applications.

3. *The interview*

    The interview stage is a crucial moment of the application process. It highlights the student's ability to be shortlisted for a position but can be challenging as the students are on their own in front of a selection panel. Therefore, we work together on preparing for interviews as much as possible.

    The Course provides strategies to provide good answers to a range of questions and tools to manage the situation on the spot, and the course instructors engage in mock interviews with the students.

4. *Communication skills*

    Professional writing is a crucial skill for almost all jobs, already valuable during the application process. Indeed, many employers ask for a writing sample together with the resume and cover letter, or they give writing tasks to candidates during the interview, with limited time to complete them. Also, during the internship and in research positions, many students will be asked to write reports and briefs or prepare infographics and presentations, for which writing skills are essential.

    We will also work on interpersonal communication skills by exercising active listening and public speaking.

5. *Strategies for networking through old and new media*

    LinkedIn is crucial for disseminating a professional profile, creating connections, finding opportunities, and sharing success stories. But it is not the only tool available. Many platforms and old-fashioned strategies can help create beneficial relationships effectively and efficiently. Students learn to navigate these tools and techniques and prepare for possible connections. They also learn strategies for effective job searching.

6. *Crucial skills for boosting your career*

    There are several skills, which are sometimes defined as 'soft', that are particularly crucial for a successful career. They are challenging to learn because they are affected by the work environment and the people you will have to work with. Therefore, it is essential to learn how to manage such skills while improving and adapting them situation by situation.

    We discuss and do exercises about these skills with examples and case studies.

    We will work on self-directed learning; self-awareness and how to provide/receive feedback; self-reflection; designing an action plan for personal change; adaptability and resiliency; collaboration.

7. *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in Research*
   Using the resources available online through Western's EDI website
   (https://uwo.ca/research/services/why_edid.html#:~:text=EDI%20is%20the%20understanding%20and,Canadian%20and%20Global%20research%20environment), we explore the importance of applying an EDI lens to research activities and how to do so. Indeed, Western Research strongly encourages research programs and funding applications to use an EDI-informed approach. An inclusive research environment contributes to diversity and can only be achieved when informed and intentional equitable practices are adopted.

Course format and resources

To support the highly interactive structure of this course, we will utilize a variety of lectures, guest speakers, and workshops according to the specific class topics.

All the lecture materials and resources (slides, readings, guest speaker presentations, etc.) will be posted on the course Brightspace site following each lecture. Required readings and other materials will be available online or directly provided by the instructors before the relevant class.

Students will receive indications on materials to be consulted before a class, which will then be discussed with the instructors or help the conversation with the guest speakers.

The work will continue in class, with exercises and activities to work on resumes, presentations, and professional goal plans and to exercise written and verbal communication skills. Students are required to participate actively with contributions from their personal experiences, in addition to the acquired knowledge from readings and resources shared by the instructors and the insights provided by the guest speakers.

The instructors will support this work through the Brightspace website and Forum and Chat functions.

Individual and group work will be assigned to cultivate teamwork skills and let students pursue topics of interest.

In addition to classes, students are strongly encouraged to participate in the ongoing Professional Development Workshop (PDW) every other week during the entire year (the most convenient day and time will be selected with the students). The Internship Coordinator will use this space to help students put into practice the information acquired during classes, finalize all the documents students need to apply for internships and job opportunities and exercise communication skills and interview strategies.

Learning Outcomes

General Learning Outcomes

1. Reflect on how research may be used in everyday work environments
2. Communicate effectively in written and oral forms to non-academic audiences
3. Self-reflectively build confidence in everyday work environments

4. Collect, collate and translate research knowledge for policy and program relevant goals.

Specific Learning Outcomes
1. Recognize personal workplace strengths and weaknesses
2. Apply coursework knowledge to the work environment
3. Apply research skills learned in coursework to the work environment
4. Adapt to the working environment of the organization
5. Adjust to feedback provided by the employer
6. Summarize your role within the organization, the value you add, your strengths and areas for improvement.

The Internship Course will develop workplace communication and self-reflection skills. The small group discussions, internship reflections, and internship panels will all provide opportunities for interaction to share insights on how the realities of research and everyday work life intersect (or not), the tensions that arise, and possible avenues for reconciling those tensions.

Course Materials

Readings, videos, infographics, and other resources will be shared with students through the Brightspace platform.
Guest Speakers might also suggest readings and resources supporting the discussion in class.

Course Evaluation

The evaluation for this course is pass/fail. To pass, students must attend classes (see note on attendance under important policies), are required to actively participate in class discussions and activities, and take part in class discussions and conversations on the Brightspace website (Forum), demonstrate knowledge of the assigned class materials (readings, videos, etc.), and prepare products for their professional careers as we will discuss in class and with Guest Speakers (such as the resume, the preparation of a simulated job interview, etc.).

Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule might change to accommodate the class, instructors, and guest speakers' needs. Any changes will be announced through our Brightspace course website.

Class	Date	Contents
Class 1	Sep 13	Introduction: What's the job about? **Alumni Q&A Panel + FRP Presentations**
Class 2	Sept 27	Working in sectors Transferrable skills *Guest speakers: TBD*
Class 3	Oct 11	Resume and cover letter *Guest speakers:* **none**
Class 4	Oct 25	Planning for your career and building references *Guest speakers*: *TBD*
Class 5	Nov 8	Clifton Skills Assessment *Guest speaker*: *TBD*
Class 6	Dec 6	Interviewing **Guest speaker:** *TBD*
Class 7	Jan 10	Mock Interviews **Guest speaker: none**
Class 8	Jan 24	Networking **Guest speaker:** *TBD*
Class 9	Feb 7	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility *Guest speakers: TBD*
Class 10	Mar 7	Presenting and Public Speaking *Guest Speaker: TBD*
Class 11	Mar 21	Project Management *Guest Speaker: TBD*
Class 12	Apr 4	Shedding the student & becoming the expert *Guest Speaker: TBD*

Important Policies

Assignment Deadlines. Students must submit their assignments by the date and time stated in the course outline and on the Brightspace website. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Any assignment not received within 5 days of the due date will not be accepted, except in the event of a documented medical or family emergency. If a student anticipates an issue with an assignment, they are recommended to speak to the professor as early as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Attendance. Class attendance is mandatory, with the option for students to miss a maximum of two classes without penalty. If you are absent for more than two classes, a discussion with the course instructor will be required in order to determine whether it is possible to make up the missed time or a Fail will be assigned to the course.

Plagiarism. Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar). All required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Standards of Professional Behaviour. It is the responsibility of all to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

> • Respect for others both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy).

> • Active engagement in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to others; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best). Take responsibility for your own learning by: relating course content and projects to your own professional interests; monitoring your own understanding; seeking clarification and assistance when necessary.

> • Personal integrity (following through on commitments; doing one's own work).

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf

Copyright of Lectures and Other Course Materials. Any materials created by the instructor (e.g., videos, notes, handouts, summaries, slide decks, assignments, exams, etc.) are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any non-authorized use of these materials constitutes an academic offence.

Scholastic Offences. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence (www.uwo. ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

Artificial Intelligence. Unless otherwise explicitly stated by your course instructor, all assignments must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI). Suspected use of AI will result in an automatic zero on assignments and may be escalated to the Program's Director to investigate for possible scholastic offence.

Accommodation. Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/.

Completion of Course Requirements. Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall–December 31; Winter–April 30, Summer–August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook: http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html.

Accessibility Options. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2111, x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html.

Mental Health. Students in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options on how to obtain help.

Health and Wellness. As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. The Wellness Education Centre (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs (http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html). Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' Living Well website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information (http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html). Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page (http://www.music.uwo.ca/, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/).

Disputing a Grade. Students who wish to dispute an assignment, exam, or course grade must write a one-page explanation justifying why their work should be re-evaluated. Work will not be re-evaluated on the basis that students were sick or feeling stressed when completing the assignment. Please be advised that a student's mark may go up or down upon re-evaluation.

Extraordinary Circumstances. The content and/or evaluation of this course is subject to change in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's or instructor's control.