

COMM 2090: Practicum

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Office: 111 Stubbs

Office Hours:

Moodle: All documents for this course are on the Moodle site. You will keep your journal on Moodle, your paperwork will be tracked on Moodle, and your grades will be posted there. ***If you fail to use Moodle to track your own paperwork and end the semester not knowing something is missing, that is YOUR PROBLEM, not mine.***

Communication Courtesy:

I will give you my cell phone # for the purpose of this class. You may text me regarding practicum questions/issues and to set up your MT conference, or to ask to speak with me on the telephone. I do not text and drive; therefore, do not panic if I do not respond immediately! Please do not forget to tell me who you are, as my caller ID will not know.

Please address me as Dr. Kauffman, “Dr.K,” or Prof. Kauffman in recognition of our professional relationship. If you have a preference as to what I call you, please let me know when I call the role the first day of class. I’ll do my best to comply.

Moodle will also be used to communicate with the class via Warhawk e-mail accounts, and I prefer to hear from you via e-mail. If you tell me something at the end of class or in the hall or anyplace on campus except my office, I am likely to forget it before I get it written down. I’m not bragging; it’s just a fact. So, please, e-mail me if it is something I need to remember.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites:

1. Completion of at least 9 hours of Communications (or Mass Communications) coursework. Before enrolling in practicum, you should have worked with your academic adviser to assess your individual preparation and choose a practicum site that corresponds with your background and goals. Practicum is designed to be taken no earlier than your second semester as a Sophomore, and ideally in your Junior year.

2. Approval of an academic adviser and a practicum site supervisor. Finding a practicum site is each student’s responsibility. The proposal form requires the signatures of both your academic advisor and your site supervisor.

Course Description:

Practicum is an opportunity to begin applying coursework to hands on experience. Students must find an on-campus site where they can work a *minimum* of 70 hours during the semester. The work they do must be relevant to their academic and professional goals in the field of communication and must be supervised by a person qualified and committed to furthering the student’s knowledge and skills.

The success of Practicum depends on student initiative. It is up to **YOU** to negotiate with your site supervisor for hours and tasks that will ensure successful completion. Attempts to explain an inadequate number of hours or a lack of learning opportunities by blaming it on your site supervisor or the course instructor ***will be unsuccessful.***

The course instructor is NOT responsible for reminding you of obligations and deadlines. You are expected to set up your own system to ensure that you complete requirements by the deadlines. Part of the purpose of Practicum is to test your ability to function like a professional. Take it seriously. ***It is possible to fail this course due to missed deadlines, missing and mismanaged paperwork, failure to complete ungraded requirements and other unprofessional behavior.***

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

By applying conceptual and theoretical knowledge in a practical work environment, students should
expand on understandings gained from previous coursework,
develop practical and problem-solving skills in relation to the work being performed,
build a base of experience upon which to strengthen future course work, *and*
gain a perspective in making career choices.

To this end, students pursuing Practicum are expected to
demonstrate that learning has taken place, *and*
demonstrate integration of knowledge gained in the classroom with experience in the field, *and*
demonstrate professionalism.

Textbooks Required: None.

Instructional Methods and Activities: Class meetings consist of an orientation at the beginning of the semester and a session for oral presentations at the end. In between, the practicum student’s “classroom” is the work site. In addition, each

student meets with her/his academic advisor or the course instructor for one required interim consultation. Other interim consultations can be arranged at the initiative of students.

Mid-Term Grades:

Again, all requirements, graded and ungraded, are tracked in the Moodle gradebook. You can check your standing in this class at **ANY TIME** by consulting your Moodle gradebook.

Formal undergraduate mid-term grades will be posted online for students to view via Banner. Only two mid-term grades are possible: "IP" or "F." If you have completed all requirements of the course to that point, a mid-term grade of "IP" (which means "in progress") will be entered. If any of your paperwork is missing or you have failed to meet any of the other requirements of the course that are due by mid-term, a mid-term grade of "F" will be entered. *Therefore, if you receive a mid-term grade of F, see the course instructor IMMEDIATELY to determine what the problem is and fix it. If you fail to check your mid-term grades and the problem persists to the end of the semester, expect a grade of D or F in the course.*

Final Grades: Students are evaluated by their site supervisor at mid-term and at the end of the semester. In addition, students must attend orientation, submit a proposal, complete a **minimum** of 70 hours of hands-on work, keep a journal, submit a final report, and give an oral presentation. Final grades will be computed as follows:

Paperwork	10%
Daily Journal	20% (30% 1 st half; 70% 2 nd half)
Supervisor Evaluations	20%
Final Written Report	25%
Oral Presentation	25%

Up to one full grade penalty will be assessed on late materials, including paperwork such as timesheets, etc. Incomplete paperwork will be returned to be corrected and counted late when it comes back in. Sloppy paperwork will be penalized.

PLEASE NOTE: Only 20% of your grade depends on your site supervisor's evaluations. Even if your site supervisor thinks you did a fabulous job, ***it is possible to fail this course due to lack of attention to the details outlined in this syllabus and presented in this orientation.***

Class Policies and Procedures:

Attendance: Attendance at the orientation and the oral presentations is required. Site supervisors will evaluate you on "dependability," which is to say, showing up for work as scheduled and on time. Low scores in dependability will affect the final grade and could result in failing the class.

Cell Phones: Practicum students are expected to observe cell phone and other personnel policies of their work sites.

Changing your practicum site is not allowed beyond the end of the first week of classes. A student who is dismissed by his/her site supervisor during the semester must drop the course (if he/she still can) and enroll again at a later date.

For additional policies that apply to all ULM courses, see the student handbook: <http://www.ulm.edu/studentpolicy/>.

Course Requirements:

1. **An approved Practicum proposal.** The student is encouraged to write a detailed description of the proposed Practicum experience, activities, expectations, and outcomes. **Your enrollment in this course is not complete until you have submitted an approved Practicum Proposal, with your signature, and the signatures of your Practicum Site Supervisor, your Academic Adviser and the Practicum course instructor.**

2. **Completion of a minimum of 70 clock hours of supervised, unpaid work**, extending over an entire semester or, in the summer, over both summer sessions. **All hours must be completed between the orientation and oral presentation dates for the academic term in which the student is enrolled in Practicum.**

3. **A journal with entries for each work shift about what you did, HOW you did it and WHY you did it that way.** The journal helps your Instructor evaluate your experience, but more importantly it **helps you in preparing your final report.** The journal is a continuing opportunity for the student to reflect on his or her progress. The successful student will analyze his or her experiences in relation to previous coursework and in terms of the overall practicum situation, discuss problems that arose and how they were solved, think critically and reflect on the process, etc. A journal that merely reports what was done will receive a very low grade. A journal that does not continue throughout the practicum will be considered a partial and earn a grade of D at best.

The journal is to be **kept on Moodle**. Each student in the class will have a journal link with his/her name on it. Only you will use the link with your name on it. Your journal link will be posted when I have your signed proposal in hand, and you should **begin immediately** with an entry about this orientation. If I do not see your first entry by early next week, I will assume you plan to drop the class. **A journal not on Moodle does not exist. Period.**

4. **Mid-term time report.** Set a schedule with your supervisor that aims for 70-100 hours spread evenly over the semester. If you have not completed at least 25 hours by the mid-term conference you will be advised to withdraw from the course, and are likely to fail the class if you do not withdraw. **Please note that your supervisor must sign for each work shift and at the bottom of both timesheets.** Hours not properly initialed by your site supervisor WILL NOT COUNT toward your practicum total.

Please note that your mid-term conference with your academic advisor **must be scheduled and recorded, with your academic advisor's signature**, on Timesheet 1. Mid-term time reports turned in without this information and/or without the site supervisor's signature are *incomplete* and will be counted late until the information is added.

Again, schedule more hours than the minimum. If you end the semester with fewer than 70 hours, you will receive a grade of F for the course. **Seventy hours is the minimum; NO EXCEPTIONS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

5. **Supervisor mid-term evaluation.** Make sure your name and the due date are printed at the top.

6. **Mid-term conference between student and academic adviser.** An appointment must be pre-scheduled for the mid-term conference with your academic adviser or the course instructor. This meeting will be used to review your time report and daily journal, and otherwise evaluate progress on the practicum. The adviser is expected to review your journal and give you a mid-term journal grade. (Academic advisers will be given guest instructor access to Moodle for this purpose.) This is your opportunity to determine what adjustments might be necessary to ensure successful completion of this course.

Your mid-term conference with your academic adviser is to take place during the time indicated on this syllabus, not before and not after. If it happens before, your adviser will not have your packet and cannot fully evaluate your progress. If it happens after, that is considered a missed deadline and your final grade will be docked.

7. **Final paperwork: Timesheet 2, Site Supervisor Final Evaluation, Student's Evaluation of the Practicum.**

8. **Final written report—typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins—of what you learned and other reflections on your practicum experience. Appropriate length: 5 pages.** Review any questions you have regarding the paper with your academic adviser and the course instructor. Your paper must be *organized around 3-5 points of learning*.

9. **Oral presentation, 5-6 minutes in length, using appropriate reinforcement(s).** The oral presentation should be well prepared and effectively delivered, commensurate with the skills to be expected of a student of communication. It is always good to include audio-visual reinforcement of your points if possible. Going over the time limit will hurt your grade. The written report and oral presentation must be *organized around 3-5 points of learning*.

Evaluation:

Your written submissions and oral presentation are the only tangible records of your Practicum, and should be given high emphasis because this work is the majority (50%) of your final grade for Practicum.

Be sure your writing demonstrates thought, reflection, and the application of classroom knowledge. A successful paper and oral report will be organized around 3 or 4 or 5 points of learning with explications of how you learned them. Points of learning can be anything from skills (e.g., "I learned to write better leads" or "I learned to edit video") to "big-picture" items like "teamwork" or "time management." Don't forget to provide examples and details of HOW you learned these things and WHY they matter. Edit and copy-edit mercilessly! Consider also these questions:

- Do you accurately and appropriately apply previous classroom knowledge and skills to the Practicum situation?
- Do you go beyond a listing of activities to explain fresh perspectives and knowledge gained from new experiences – more than an inventory of what was done, but an analysis of what you learned from what was done?
- Do you demonstrate a balance between technical information (e.g., equipment operation, technical theory), the message or content of the project(s) completed in the Practicum (e.g., audience analysis, scripting, client goals, evaluation of effectiveness), and workplace dynamics (e.g., worker interaction, organizational structure)?
- Are you able to effectively communicate about your experiences orally and in writing?

Failure to complete the minimum number of clock hours will result in a final grade of "F" regardless of the circumstances. PLAN AHEAD. Have PLAN B!

Course Topics/Schedule:

*Please be reminded that my contact information is at the top of p. 1 of this syllabus.
The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule as needed.*

The following schedule is generic. It is here for illustration. The schedule varies from semester to semester and specific due dates are on each semester's syllabus.

	Location	Time	Date
Orientation	144 Stubbs Hall	4 p.m.	First day of class, or, for summer, study day of spring finals week.
Practicum Proposal	111 Stubbs Hall*	11:30 am	3-5 days following orientation
Mid-term Evaluation and Time Report #1 with mid-term conference appointment and academic advisor's signature. <i>(When you go to your academic advisor to schedule your appointment, you might need to remind him/her that you are not to meet until next week, at which point he/she will have your practicum packet in hand.)</i>	111 Stubbs Hall	11:30 am	1 week before mid-term
Mid-term Conference with Academic Adviser	His/Her Office	Per Appointment	Mid-term Week
Mid-term Conference report returned to me <i>(Your academic advisor may put it in my mailbox or give it to you to return to me. Either way, you are responsible for checking your Moodle gradebook to make sure I have received it and given you credit.)</i>	111 Stubbs Hall	11:30 pm	Tuesday of Week following meetings.
Written Report, Time Report #2, Journal and Final Evaluations	111 Stubbs Hall	11:30 am	Friday of last week of classes
Oral Presentations:	144 Stubbs Hall	1 – 2:30 pm	Wednesday of finals week

*If I am not in my office when you come to turn in papers, just slide them under the door. It does help if your documents are paper-clipped together.