

Preparing for HDF 4991: Internship Course for HDFS Majors
Capstone Senior Service-Learning Course
Designed to Be Taken for 3 Credits Each of Fall and Spring Senior Year

NOTE: This document has been developed to help you prepare for HDF 4991; specifics about the actual course you will take may vary somewhat as the course develops/changes each semester/year. The general information provided here is typical of what the course is designed to do, the different course requirements, and the expected hours of work.

Course Overview

HDF 4991: Internship, is the senior capstone course in the HDFS major. It is unique in that it -site supervised work experience with a structured academic learning plan directed by a core HDFS faculty member. That is, the course has two essential components:

- (1) A **student-established** and **Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor** approved direct onsite supervised internship experience in an HDFS-related agency, organization, or organization, or other professional organization working on HDFS-related issues and doing HDFS-

across two semesters, specifically 3 credits in the fall and 3 in the spring semester of senior year. This two-semester experience offers students sufficient time to really become a part of an organization and get to know the rhythms of social service work; develop and have opportunities to apply newly developed skills and new and deepening academic knowledge to practice; and practice applying knowledge and insights gained from experience to inform their understanding of related research and theory in HDFS. The two semesters of this Capstone course also allows the academic demands to be spread out across a longer period of time, making it more likely that students will be successful.

Students are expected to find and establish a placement prior to the start of the fall semester. Note that if the placement requires a background check, this should also be done in advance as waiting until the start of the semester means delaying the internship start date beyond what is required.¹

Two-Semester Sequence Policy

The HDFS Internship (HDF 4991) requirement is designed and offered regularly as a sequenced two-semester course, with the first 3 credits offered in the fall and the second 3 credits offered in the spring of the academic year. This course is intended for students in their final year of the HDFS program, which is most often their fourth year (senior year). Alternative timelines for completing the Internship are not offered.

The two semesters of HDF 4991 are linked, but students will receive a grade at the end of each semester based on the work completed during that semester. Students must succeed in the first semester academically and with respect to professional performance to be eligible to take the second semester. Work in the second semester builds upon the work from the first semester; success is measured in terms of academic requirements and professional performance/behavior. Because of this, and to deepen student learning and skill development, students are expected to remain in the same placement across both semesters. Students who need or wish to switch placements may be accommodated, but such students should note that additional work will be required to be prepared to engage in the second-semester requirements that build upon first-semester assignments.

Permission: There are two levels of permission required for this course: Program and Instructor.

The HDFS Program Faculty and the Instructor of Record are committed to ensuring that the student and the sponsoring internship site have a positive experience working together, that student learning is placed at the center of the experience (at least for 2/3 of the time in the field) work meets some organizational needs, and that the reputation of the HDFS program and of HDFS students are enhanced through the internship experience.

¹ As per HDFS Program Policy, students in the 3 credit fall version of the course are expected to have secured a placement prior to the start of the fall semester but must have done so by the end of the first week of classes (the first Friday, regardless of when in the week classes start), and be in the field engaging in regular internship hours no later than the end of the second week of classes (on or before the second Friday of the semester).

For all these reasons, students must get permission from both Program Faculty and the Instructor of Record to take this course. In addition to meeting the course pre-requisites and Senior Level Standing, to be admitted to the 3 credit Fall Internship course by Program Faculty, HDFS majors must:

- be in good academic standing,
- have a record of completing work in prior courses and meeting due dates for assignments,
- have consistently evidenced responsibility in attending meetings and fulfilling course, program, and university level responsibilities,
- attend an informational session or make alternative arrangements to learn about the course requirements and expectations.

For Academic Instructor Permission, students must attend a Planning Meeting and meet any other requirements laid out by the academic instructor. Additional meetings may be required or requested (the latter perhaps, if students want some guidance regarding placement possibilities) during the semester before the course begins. Students are expected to stay in touch with their Academic Instructor as they work to find a placement during this time. Summer communications

contract and availability (most faculty at UVM are 9-month faculty, not on contract during the summers).

If a student is viewed by the Academic Instructor and/or by the Program Faculty as not having met the necessary criteria, the Program Faculty will discuss the situation to determine whether an exception will be made or the student may be required to delay the internship until steps have been taken to address the concerns and demonstrate a greater likelihood of successfully completing the internship course and meeting obligations to an Internship site. The student should submit a formal request explaining their situation and why they believe they are prepared for success and should be allowed into the course. This should be directed to the HDFS Program Coordinator, who will bring the request to the HDFS Program Faculty for discussion and a vote.

Summary of Permissions and Steps: Admittance to the course (permission to register) indicates the Internship Instructor has granted permission for the student to enroll in the course. Program Permission still needs to be confirmed, and in some cases, this may require waiting until the end of the pre-registration semester or even until the start of the Fall semester when course grades and other information becomes available (academic probation, student conduct cases still pending, additional work completed and approved to demonstrate skills and professional behaviors not evidenced adequately in HDFS 1, etc.).

establishment of an approved placement and starting in the field according to the required time frame: See Footnote 1.

Internship Information: Criteria for Appropriate and Acceptable Internship Placements

In brief, an appropriate Internship placement for this course is one where (a) the focus of the organization is on HDFS or allows you to bring an HDFS lens to the work, (b) you are able to engage directly in HDFS-related work that is varied and adequately challenging throughout the duration of your placement; and (c) your learning and professional development are at the center of the experience, such that your tasks and responsibilities change as your academic learning, professional and personal development needs change and as your skills develop.

Academic Instructor who also serves as the Faculty Supervisor. At times, Program Faculty may need to weigh in, especially if the

What To Avoid

Over the years, we have identified some common pitfalls placements that have not worked out in some way, shape or form.

Small Settings/One Person Operations or a Private Family Setting: An Internship that involves your working with one client in a small organization or with one professional in an independent practice is unlikely to be approved because of the risk this entails to you move midway through your internship, or the professional could close their practice, leaving you with no placement mid-way through the internship course.

Interning at a Place of Work: We allow students to be paid for work hours that are also counted as internship hours (more on this later). A problem arises, however, if the work has specified activities and assignments that cannot be changed in response to the

Getting Started Looking for Placements of Interest: When and How

We expect students to start searching for an internship no later than the middle of the semester prior to their enrollment in the course. Some students may want to begin the search earlier, and even volunteer at a desired internship site the prior year or semester, to better position themselves to get that internship. There are two main documents (including this Planning Guide) that are designed to help get you started in your search and give you a good understanding of the course and internship expectations.

1. This Planning Guide
2. Internship Site Ideas: A list of programs that students have interned at.

Depending on the Academic Instructor, additional materials may be distributed for students to review as they work to identify and begin to design their internship experience, including

- Service-Learning Contract: A draft of the contract you will be expected to complete as one of the first assignments in the course, is provided for you to examine. The draft and final versions are to be developed by the student in consultation with their Internship Supervisor and with the Faculty Supervisor/Course Instructor. All three people must sign the contract/approve the final version. [Starting Fall 2021, this contract will be completed electronically in Tk20 but the word version introduces you to the key elements.]
- Defining/Understanding Service Learning Reading: Ash, S. L., & Clayton, P. H. (2009). Introduction to service learning. In *Learning through critical reflection: A tutorial for service-learning students*. Raleigh, NC: PHC Ventures.

After reviewing these materials and keeping in mind the criteria for an acceptable Internship site, [Handshake](#) platform designed to connect students to internship options among other things; (b) talk with current seniors about their placements; (c) check out United Way for various volunteer opportunities; this might help you learn more about local organizations; and (d) search the web for the types of organizations you are drawn to as a way to identify your interests and possibilities.

If you are unsure of a direction you want to go or the type of placement you might want, make an appointment with your academic advisor and/or the Academic Instructor for HDFS 4991 to discuss your interests, strengths, curiosities, hopes and dreams for careers, etc. We can help you identify possible directions to pursue.

Once you know you are interested in a particular placement/site, set up an interview with the appropriate person. Keep in mind that you are both likely using this interview to learn more about each other and to determine whether there is a good match between you. Your interviewer will want to learn what you have to offer, and what you are hoping to get from the experience. Meanwhile, you will want to learn what the organization would want from you and what learning experiences can be offered. What would you do in the setting? What would you likely have the opportunity to learn (consider here content and practice/skills)? Ask about any training the organization would provide to you, what supervision would be available, and who would likely be your supervisor. Ask about schedules, flexibility, and anything else that would help you understand what you would be doing at the site/for the organization and what you would be likely learning through the experience.

In preparation for an interview:

Consider having a cover letter and a resume to submit at this time or as follow-up.

Be sure you understand the requirements of the Internship course, especially the number of hours per week you will be required to put in AND know the number of hours per week you t is required. It is also helpful to have a tentative schedule for when you could complete your hours.

bringing to the Internship, and to explain the personal and professional skills and HDFS knowledge you hope to gain from the Internship.

Be prepared to describe the HDFS major and the Internship requirement to potential Internship Supervisors as they may not know what HDFS is or what it would mean for them to take on an HDFS major for an Internship. Potential supervisors may especially want to know what would be expected of them; towards this end, you should convey the expectation that they would offer you professional development and training opportunities, as well as guidance and feedback about your work, provide feedback to you at least at mid-semester

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Sometimes it becomes clear during the interview that the agency cannot use you, or that you are not qualified to do what they need. Use the interview to broaden your network of possibilities: ask for their ideas about other opportunities that might be available. Where else do they think you might find good experience?

After each interview, discuss your experiences with various others who might help you determine whether a particular Internship is likely a good fit for you. Also, send a letter of thanks interested, let them know this as well. Be sure to do this within any time frame that was identified for their decision.

If you do get an offer that you want to accept, do so verbally (after having taken some time away to think about it), and follow up with a written letter of acceptance. Write down in this letter what your agreement is. Do letters of regret to any other sit

Once You Have an Internship, Next Steps To Take In Advance of the Semester

Once you establish an approved site, you should complete whatever needs to be completed so that you are ready to start in the field the first week of the semester. This typically includes various paperwork, some trainings (some may happen after you start) and a **Background Check**.

and get started on it.

NOTE: If you anticipate any problems with your background check, discuss this with your Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor ASAP. We may need to tailor your Internship search to sites willing and able to accept students under this condition. An alternative experience/course may be an option (or even necessary for you, depending on the issues), something that the Program Faculty will weigh in on.

Another thing you might start developing before the start of the semester is the first draft of the Service-Learning Contract. This will help you ensure that your Internship Supervisor is aware of your ideal learning and development goals and that the responsibilities/tasks they imagine you taking on will work to support these goals.

Key Additional Information about the HDF 4991 Course: How it Operates, Your Role as a Student, and How You Will Be Graded

HDF 4991 is a senior capstone course and thus the demands and expectations are at their highest for you as a graduating senior in HDF, in terms not just of amount but also quality of work.

There are three key people available to support your success in this course:

through the required written assignments, in class participation and through other means.

Except perhaps for a small portion of your grade, your course grade is determined not by what you do in the field or how well you do it but by the academic work you submit that demonstrates your learning and your engagement in the course.

Miscellaneous Information about HDF 4991 and Responses to Typical Questions

Is the Internship Course Available in the Summer?

No. Unfortunately for various financial and institutional reasons, we cannot offer the internship in the summer. For instance, there would need to be a full-time, approved HDFS faculty member available and willing to supervise you.

Additional Credits. Some students who have completed all required courses (in HDFS and general education requirements) and have elective credits available, may enroll in more than a total of six credits of HDF 4991. This allows students to focus even more fully on this important capstone course, expanding time in the field and time for critical reflection upon field experiences and the HDFS profession and discipline. Required hours and academic work are adjusted accordingly.

How Many Other Courses Should I Take, Especially HDFS Seminar Courses?

The 3 credit Internship course should be thought of as AT LEAST equivalent to the work of one upper level seminar course in HDFS and as such, you are required to take no more than two other seminar courses in any one semester along with the 3 credit internship. Any student accepted for a 6 credit internship should only be in one seminar course.

We understand that graduation demands may require you to enroll in more courses and credits than we require; in this case you may request an exception which may be granted if you can demonstrate that you have reduced out-of-class demands on your time as much as possible so that you are best positioned for success while not stretching yourself so thin that you exhaust yourself physically and/or are unable to keep up with the academic requirements or meet your internship site expectations.

Can I get Paid for my Internship?

As already mentioned, HDFS allows students to get paid for the hours you are working for your organization. We allow this because you are not earning credit for this work, but rather for your demonstration of learning through reflecting upon this work in relation to HDFS. That said, we will not approve a placement for an internship where you are also an employee if the commitment to you from the organization and supervisor is not primarily to your learning and development. This would be the case if there is likely little leeway in what you do because the needs of the organization or your development. This would be the case:

Some of the most common misunderstandings and traps students tend to fall into that negatively impact success in this course are:

1. *My Internship work is the most important part of this course; I am better off taking on more hours when asked than saying no and using those hours to engage in reading about, thinking about and critically reflecting upon issues I am learning about in the field.*
2. *I will learn the most by doing during my Internship work; documenting this work in my journals and identifying and completing readings to inform my thinking is just not important.*
3. *Kl'bo { 'Kp'vgt puj kr 'Uwr gt xkuqt 'y j kpmu'j ki j r'f 'qhl'o g. 'Kluj qwf 'i gv'cp "ō Cō 'kp" 'y g'eqwt ugO'*
4. *K'f qgupø'o c wgt 'y j gyj gt 'Kp "qp 'vqr 'qhl'y g'cecf go ke'y qt m'cu'rqi "cu'Kco "c 't gur qpukdrg" professional at my Internship site.*
5. *K'f qgupø'o c wgt 'y j cv'Kf q'cv'bo { 'Kp'vgt puj kr. 'luq'rqi "cu'Kecp'rqi 'y j g'j qwt uO'*