

**Stockton University**  
**“Syllabus”:** GUIDELINES FOR  
**PSYC3900: PSYCHOLOGY Field Placements &**  
**GERO3900: GERONTOLOGY INTERNSHIPS**

**\*\*\* Note:** These are the requirements for students in PSYC3900 or GERO3900 under the supervision of Dr. David Burdick. You must carefully read and heed ALL instructions. Note that other professors may have different guidelines. Mine follow the standards of the [Association for Gerontology in Higher Education](#). (Updated October 11, 2023)

## **I. General Comments**

Field placements and Internships are regularly reported by alumni as the most, rewarding and useful college course. Hopefully, you will also find this to be true. To maximize your likelihood of a successful experience you must be motivated, disciplined, careful, and mindful of the great opportunity you are about to embark on. An important start is to VERY CAREFULLY READ the following guidelines. Please keep them handy, **mark important dates in your calendars**, and be sure to always ask questions whenever you do not completely understand guidelines and/or if you have questions that aren't addressed here. If you don't follow the guidelines you may not be allowed into the course, you may be dropped, or your grade may suffer. These situations sadden me when they happen – which thankfully is fairly rare.

The “Steps” to sign up for an internship or field placement under my supervision are maintained by the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences (SOBL) at this link:  
<https://stockton.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/internships-centers-initiatives.html>

## **II. Internship Agreement Form, Internship Information Form, and more on expectations.**

You must complete these forms carefully and submit them on schedule as noted in “Steps” (unless I have agreed otherwise). Your failure to get these important materials submitted 'on schedule' may jeopardize your acceptance into the program, even if I have allowed you to pre-register. Such lead-time is necessary so that we can work with Stockton's legal department, the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the placement organization to insure that all necessary agreements and paperwork are done before you start.

**You** should complete the Student Agreement form after very careful thought and in consultation with your site supervisor. First, consider **your** general objectives for this internship. Don't write just anything - **think** about what you really want to get out of this experience. Next, in consultation with the site supervisor you must match your goals and objectives with the kinds of experiences that they can provide. You should then complete the form accordingly, carefully including proposed work schedule, functions and responsibilities.

You must plan to complete *at least 120 hours at your placement site*. Please note that you *may not start until after our orientation meeting (usually held at 4:30pm on the first Thursday of fall and spring semesters)*. You should plan to finish approximately one week before the end of the semester – not before. A handy rule of thumb in figuring out your schedule is  $12 \times 10 = 120$ ... 12 weeks, 10 hours per week, would get you done with the 120 hours.

Be as specific as possible in listing the responsibilities, activities, and functions that you propose. I will be looking for a collection of verbs – starting perhaps with more passive such as “observe” or “shadow” and moving to more active and advanced, such as “plan”, “deliver”, “present”, “lead”, etc. If you are not prepared to write down a number of meaningful activities, then you may not have conducted a very meaningful interview, or your selected site may not be a very good choice.

So, this Agreement Form is designed to get you thinking and to help you plan. If you hand it in with no objectives or other missing information you are not giving a good first impression of a future professional. From start to finish of your Field Placement/Internship, your consistent goal should be to

impress people – to care and be careful; to be on-time, thorough, skilled, and effective. We preparing you for careers working with vulnerable populations – the elderly, people in mental health centers, children, other people in need. A passing grade says to the world that you are capable. An “A” says, I believe this person has the capacity to become one of the best professionals/providers you will meet. Always ask for help if you are uncertain. It will make you a better student, a better professional, a better person.

Once you have completed a draft of your agreement and information form, have your site supervisor review them and make suggestions or corrections. Once you have finalized it, share it with me by e-mail. I will approve or make suggested changes. Once I approve, be sure to submit it as required in the "Steps" at the SOBL Internship Site that I gave you a link to above.

The **Information Form** section that you submit with your Student Agreement allows me to effectively communicate with you and your supervisor. You **MUST** complete this **CLEARLY, ACCURATELY** and **COMPLETELY!** Incomplete, inaccurate or misspelled names may lead to a 1/2 letter grade reduction in your final grade for the course.

### **III. Expectations:**

**A. REQUIRED TEXT:** (Reviews are 25% of total grade). The following text is **required** reading and can be purchased or rented online. It's a new book for Spring 2023 placements and it's fantastic! And it is much less expensive than the previous book we used. (About \$84 paperback or \$64.00 for digital. \*\*\*\* Remember, you need to read chapters 1 & 2 **BEFORE** you go through the steps of signing up for your internship. A link is provided at the SOBL

Karasik, K, Donorfio, L, & Greenberg, L. (2022). *The Gerontology Field Placement: Internships & Practicum in Aging*. NY: Springer Publishers.

You must write brief, 1-1.5 page (single spaced, approximate), reviews of each chapter. *Report* on the key points and *reflect* upon these points' relationship to your life, courses, planned internship, and planned career. It is best to write these in first person to personalize them and help you pay attention to their value to you. So, don't write "You should always consult with your professor if you experience a crisis at your placement site". Write "I should always ...". This also is called "Writing for the Correct Audience". Getting used to this might take a little effort for you – but it also increases your **mindfulness** and ability to **live fully in the moment** – something that seems increasingly difficult in the modern world. This task of making the most of the book, and the internship, takes close attention and deep processing. Plan for it!

You must submit most reviews prior to the beginning of your placement. Watch for e-mail from me near the beginning of January for Spring 2024 due dates, which will also appear in our course calendar on Blackboard. You should not submit them all at once. Submit the first one or two and wait for my feedback, which may help you to improve the subsequent reviews.

An assignment submission link is provided for each chapter. You'll need to start submitting your chapter reviews about 2 weeks before the start of the term. I require one chapter per day for each weekday leading up to the term. You can get started earlier if that's more convenient for you. Remember that you'll already have read Chapters 1 & 2 in your initial set-up process.

### **B. ORIENTATION MEETING:**

A mandatory orientation meeting is held during the first week of the semester (usually at 4:30 on the first Thursday, I'll send an e-mail to your Stockton e-mail address). We will have brief introductions, I'll review general expectations and we'll go over how our course is set up in Blackboard. When you enter our Blackboard course, please be sure to read guidelines carefully, especially the due-dates for paper topic approvals, outlines, etc., and on how to write a paper. (See below). PLEASE ask questions early and often if you are ever uncertain or having difficulties.

### **C. YOUR WORK AT THE PLACEMENT SITE (25% of Grade):**

You are a representative of Stockton and are expected to behave in an appropriate and professional manner. How you perform in this internship will have great bearing on whether the agency/program accepts Stockton Interns in the future, on how you will be evaluated, and on your chances of receiving a letter of recommendation from the site and/or me for future jobs and graduate school.

General guidelines include the following:

- Re-Read Karasik Chapters 1 & 2 – marvelous recommendations for making the most of your placement! Refer regularly to all of Karasik's chapters during the course of your placement.
- Again, you must complete a total minimum of 120 hours of work at the program/agency. Please keep an accurate log of your hours and make sure that your agency supervisor also keeps track so that he/she can certify your completion. (For GERO Interns, at least this much time must be working with senior programs, generally in direct contact with older adults.)
- Be prompt. If you are scheduled to be there on a regular basis and at a specific time you must keep to that schedule and notify your supervisor and/or clients ahead of time if you must be absent. By signing up for this placement you have made a formal commitment to the agency. Treat this like an important job and only call in absent in emergencies or when you are sick. I have occasionally received feedback from site supervisors like this: "If this student were an employee, she'd have gotten a pink slip [been fired] for such behavior." Most commonly 'this behavior' has been failure to call in before an absence.
- Be courteous. This is a new learning experience for you. Agency personnel are most likely to provide a superior learning experience for you if you are courteous, friendly, and eager to learn and take part in various activities. If you want to express displeasure, or to 'ventilate', feel free to do this in the comfort of our Blackboard weekly discussions. If you prefer a private conversation with me, we can set one up anytime you request it.
- Follow directions. Ask questions if you don't understand something. Follow all policies outlined to you by the placement site.
- Act like you care, and show motivation: One of the most common lower than average rating of interns is the apparent lack of initiative and motivation. (And, thankfully, this doesn't happen very frequently either). You need to take initiative and 'be the agent of change' in your internship, instead of passively waiting for them to do something for you.
- Ask questions - whenever you are uncertain of a task, instructions, etc.
- Try to stay out of agency/program politics. **Talk to me immediately if problems surface.**
- Follow standards of dress which are appropriate at your placement.
- Follow guidelines regarding appropriate behavior that you have learned from reading the assigned textbook (see below).

#### **D. REFLECTIONS AND BLACKBOARD COURSE:** (25% of your grade)

A discussion topic is set up in our Blackboard course for each student in the class. You must report and reflect on your placement activities at least once per week for the duration of the semester.

This assignment is designed to help you to be mindful and analyze your experiences in more depth, rather than just "putting in time" or "going through the motions". For example, you should constantly evaluate your activities. Are they therapeutic? How? How do they relate to what you have learned in other classes?

Jot down brief notes each day after you have been at the field placement or internship and at any other time that you have appropriate related thoughts. This is **not** to be just a catalog of what you did each day. Then, enter your reflections into your discussion item in our Blackboard course. Be creative! The reflections help me to keep up with what you are doing, but are primarily designed to enhance your learning experience, and the learning experiences of your fellow interns.

You are **also** expected to read and to make comments on the reflections of the other students in the class. PLEASE do not use full names of clients - we need to respect confidentiality.

Also, I will occasionally pose questions to individual interns or the whole group in a discussion item called ‘**co-seminar**’. You must keep up with this item. I will state explicitly if I want responses and I will expect timely responses - within a week.

**E. TERM PAPER – Review of the Scholarly Literature (25% of Grade):** You must write a paper that is related to, but **not** directly **about**, your internship. For example, someone working at an Adult Daycare Center could write on "Best Practice in Senior Daycare," "The Etiology and Epidemiology of Alzheimer’s," "Family Caregivers & Alzheimer’s," etc. The **body** of your paper should be eight to ten double-spaced pages, in addition to the references. You should have a minimum of approximately ten reference citations which should be from scholarly peer-reviewed journals. Generally, textbooks are not acceptable references. You may also use one or two professional/scholarly sources from the Internet. ChatGPT is not scholarly and not acceptable. for use on this paper. Early in the semester, you’ll be required to view and review a series of short instructional videos intended to help you find and use scholarly sources.

The paper must **carefully** follow the guidelines set by the American Psychological Association for proper citations and referencing of materials (“APA STYLE”). Papers that do not accurately follow APA style either receive a grade reduction or an "F" so please be careful and ask if you are unsure. Papers that appear to be plagiarized will be dealt with as is outlined in Stockton’s [Student Academic Honesty Procedures](#), newly revised in Spring/Summer 2014. (Copies of the APA Publications Manual are available in the Library and perhaps the Bookstore. You can also find APA style guidelines under the Library homepage – online resources – e-reference shelf. If you google “Purdue Owl APA” you can also find handy guidelines.

Consult “Paper Guidelines” in our Blackboard Course for additional tips on effective writing, and “Course Calendar” for specific due dates and deadlines. Deadlines are generally expected on a schedule similar to the following:

- Paper topics must be approved by near the end of the 6th week of the semester
- You must submit an outline of your paper by about the end of the 10th week
- You must submit a reasonably complete draft of your paper to turnitin.com and then to me approximately 2 weeks before the end of the term.
- The final complete paper is usually due at least one full week prior to the last official day of the semester.

Papers are submitted and reviewed electronically. You must also keep a **log sheet** on which you have entered across the course of the semester brief indication of your progress and date of all tasks involved in writing the paper. Submit this, via e-mail, when you submit your final paper.

#### **IV. EVALUATION:**

As noted above, you will be evaluated based on chapter reviews (25%), the reflections & related work on Blackboard (25%), the final paper (25%), and the evaluation made by your agency supervisor (25%). A copy of the supervisor evaluation form is posted in our Blackboard course for you to review. All four parts of your grade are integral to the complete learning experience.

Any questions??? Please let me know. I look forward to working with you, making this the best experience possible, and contributing to your personal and professional growth.