

## ENGL 610 – Professional Writing Internship

**Semester:** All Semesters      **Format:** On-Site Internship      **Credit Hours:** 3

**Instructor:** Dr. Brian Ballentine, Dept. of English, PO Box 6296 (211 Colson Hall)

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**Office Hours:** Contact instructor via phone or e-mail between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

**Prerequisites:** Completion of at least 18 credit hours toward the 30-credit graduate degree with a grade of B or above; completed coursework will typically include English 601 (Studies in Composition and Rhetoric); 602 (Editing); English 605 (Professional Writing Theory); and English 606 (Humanities Computing). Upon petition to the graduate program supervisor for the MA in Professional Writing and Editing, one of these courses may be taken concurrently with the internship.

**Course Objectives:** The internship provides a degree-completion option for the Master's in Professional Writing and Editing (PWE). The intent of this experience is to provide students with a venue in which they can apply the skills and the knowledge that they have acquired during their training in the program. The experience is intended as both a culmination of graduate work and as a preparation for further work in non-academic environments. For an internship to qualify for degree completion credit, it must involve substantive work that draws upon the student's skills as an English graduate student. These skills include (but are not limited to) writing, editing, proofreading, research (library or Internet based), web design, document production (as in brochures, promotional materials, educational materials), grant writing, document analysis, etc.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:** The emphasis in this graduate internship is on understanding professional writing contexts. Upon completion of the internship, the student will be able to:

- Analyze and assess the field of professional writing and editing through first-hand experience
- Clarify career goals within a professional writing and editing context
- Apply discipline-related knowledge and research to the field

**Appropriate Clients or Employers.** Before beginning a search for an appropriate client, the graduate student will meet with the PWE Coordinator to discuss current leads and on-going possibilities. Clients may consist of:

- A WVU instructor, office, program, department, or other academic unit
- An area service, cultural, or community organization
- A local, regional, or national company

**On-the-Job Work Hours.** Both the graduate and undergraduate internships may be taken for three credit hours only. For the graduate-level internship, students must complete a minimum of 100 hours on the job. Hours may not include time spent preparing logs, reports, or other materials required for academic credit (though they may include time spent writing similar materials required by the client).

**Appropriate Tasks.** PWE supervisor will help students find internships that will allow them to produce a primary document or series of closely related documents. Students will be advised to avoid internships in which they perform a variety of unrelated tasks with no clear responsibility for or impact on a final product. Students may do an internship in their current workplace, but

they must demonstrate that the work for the internship is not a part of their regular job responsibilities.

At the end of the internship, students must submit a portfolio to the faculty supervisor (see below), who will then recommend a grade for the internship.

**Grading:** The final grade will be based on a portfolio of written work graded by a faculty adviser and an on-site evaluation that the site supervisor will provide to the student (with a copy to the faculty adviser). The faculty member will record the final grade.

Portfolio Content: 70 points (typically due by 4:00 p.m. on the last day of classes):

- 15 points. A 4+ page progress report that records the intern's experience at the mid-term point will be developed into a 10+ page portfolio preface by the end of the semester. This writing at the mid-term and the end of the semester asks the student to reflect on the writing and learning processes; at the end of the semester, this document also explains the student's decisions about the 20+ pages of selected writing (see below).
- 20 points. A 10+ page annotated bibliography that demonstrates understanding of current issues in the profession (based on a preliminary booklist approved by the faculty supervisor in Week 5).
- 35 points: A 20+ page selection of internship writing that represents the student's abilities to write for a range of situations, audiences, and purposes.

Portfolio Criteria. The portfolio will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *Rhetorical Situation.* The individual examples and the portfolio as a whole demonstrate a sophisticated awareness of and response to the particular needs of the audience and purpose in this particular context.
- *Genre.* The individual examples and the portfolio as a whole demonstrate a sophisticated awareness and application of relevant genre conventions, including format, diction, and tone.
- *Document Design.* The individual examples and the portfolio as a whole demonstrate a sophisticated understanding and application of layout, visual design, audience cues, and structured information.
- *Critical Thinking.* The individual examples and the portfolio as a whole demonstrate a critical engagement with the process of writing and the intern's learning process.
- *Reflection and Analysis.* The portfolio preface demonstrates the writer's ability to reflect, analyze, and interpret across texts (e.g., seeing relationships, becoming aware of dissonance, new questions, problems, etc.)
- *Research.* The portfolio demonstrates the writer's ability to evaluate, integrate, and document research; as part of this ability to integrate research, the portfolio demonstrates the writer's ability to support assertions and arguments with relevant details and research.

On-Site Evaluation: 30 points. The student intern will also be evaluated by the on-site supervisor at two points during the course of the internship; each evaluation is worth 15 points. The site supervisor will evaluate the intern's ability to meet the following criteria:

- *Punctual* (Rarely late or absent and always responsible about missed obligations.)
- *Dependable* (Prompt, trustworthy, follows directions, meets obligations.)
- *Adaptable* (Catches on quickly, can switch jobs, responsive.)
- *Collegial* (Cooperative, well-mannered, pleasant to work with.)

- *Positive* (Enthusiastic, a good team worker, willing to cooperate, pushes for self-improvement.)
- *Self-Motivating* (Ability to take initiative and work without supervision.)
- *Eager to Improve* (Seeks assistance when needed, accepts criticism, and follows through on suggestions.)

**Grading Policy:** The on-site supervisor will provide the faculty supervisor with evaluations of the intern three times during a semester (typically at 5-week intervals). Students who receive *unsatisfactory reports* will be counseled by the supervisor and the faculty adviser on how to improve performance. Students who receive more than one *unsatisfactory* on-site evaluation will be removed from the site and will fail the course. The faculty supervisor will provide a mid-term progress report to the student and will be responsible for assigning a final grade based on the descriptors below.

<p><i>A Work</i> 91-100</p>	<p><i>Exemplary.</i> The on-site responsibilities have been completed in a professional and timely manner and the intern has demonstrated an outstanding level of dependability, collegiality, and initiative. The written work likewise demonstrates originality and initiative. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct. The portfolio demonstrates a range of well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented texts that a company could use without further revisions. This work could serve as a model for future interns.</p>
<p><i>B Work</i> 81-90</p>	<p><i>Good.</i> The on-site responsibilities and the written portfolio for the internship have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The documents generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of audience, purpose, and genre without the need for further major revisions. They may need some <i>minor</i> improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics. In the workplace, a company would be able to use the documents without major revisions of any sort.</p>
<p><i>C Work</i> 71-80</p>	<p><i>Unsatisfactory for Graduate Credit.</i> The on-site responsibilities and/or the written portfolio for the internship have, on more than one occasion, not been completed in a professional manner. Written documents may be adequate in most respects, but they require some substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics. The written work does not manifest the degree of intellectual engagement or critical thinking expected of graduate-level writing. In the workplace, the documents would require further revisions before being distributed or made part of a permanent record.</p>
<p><i>D/F Work</i> 70 and below</p>	<p><i>Failing.</i> The on-site work shows a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the internship experience. Documents are unprofessional. They generally require extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics before the documents could be used by a company. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and genre. In the workplace, a company would most probably have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.</p>

**Social Justice Statement:** West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national

origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

**Special Needs.** If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

### **Policies and Procedures**

Attendance and Participation. Meeting appointments and commitments is part of being a professional. Emergency situations may arise that make it impossible for you to be present, but you are otherwise expected to make a professional commitment to your work. We will expect you to make up any emergency absence by negotiating additional work and hours with your site supervisor. More than one absence from an internship may result in a failing grade.

Late Work. Late work is unprofessional and, therefore, unacceptable. Please note that even a single late deadline will negatively affect your final grade. After one week, late work will not be eligible for inclusion in your portfolio.

**Internship Concerns.** In the event that you have a concern about your internship assignments, your site supervisor's evaluation, please talk to the supervising faculty member to identify the nature of your concern or complaint and to discuss a resolution to the problem. (If you have a concern about your faculty supervisor, please talk to the program director or department chair.) Most conflicts or concerns are best resolved through direct communication.

**English 610: Graduate Professional Writing Internship**  
**Schedule of Assignments and Evaluations**  
 All Semesters

The Intern is responsible for submitting the assignments and evaluations to the English Department Faculty Supervisor by the dates listed below.

<b>Internship Start Date:</b>	<b>Internship End Date:</b>
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<b>Intern Assignments</b>	<b>Deadline to Faculty Supervisor</b>
Intern Assignment #1: Preliminary Reading List (10+ entries, approved by faculty supervisor)	Week 5
Intern Assignment #2: Progress Report (1,000 words)	Mid-Term Point (Week 7-8)
Intern Assignment #3: Annotated Bibliography (2,500 words)	Week 10
Intern Assignment #4: Final Reflection (2,500 words)	End-of-Semester (Week 15)
Intern Assignment #5: Portfolio (20+ pp. of workplace writing)	End-of-Semester (Week 15)

<b>Intern Evaluations</b>	<b>Deadline to Faculty Supervisor</b>
Intern Evaluation: On-Site Supervisor Report #1	Week 7
Intern Evaluation: On-Site Supervisor Report #2	Week 15