

Practicum Group Course Spring 08 Syllabus

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I. **Introduction:**

The Practicum Group (PG) is a course that helps students to integrate what they are experiencing in their internships, in their classrooms, in their communities, and in their living situations with the immediacy of the urban realities around them. The goals of the course are to assist students in 1) reflecting on their experiences over the semester, 2) developing critical thinking skills, 3) understanding their role as engaged citizens, and 4) reflecting on their calling in relationship to the urban environment and the common good.

The starting point for this type of learning is located in the life experiences of students themselves. Using this lens as a point of departure, students will analyze and reflect on their internships, urban life, and their role in impacting the common good. In PG, each student will share weekly their thoughts on the seminars/city/internship, conduct research in a Chicago neighborhood that they will spend time getting to know, and reflect on how these experiences this semester have informed their calling.

While we will spend some time exploring and talking about your internships, what you like and dislike, we want to turn our gaze outward to think more concretely about our responsibilities as thoughtful and engaged citizens. Some of the questions we will explore in this course include:

- * *“What brought me to this place?”*
- * *“What is my role in my community?”*
- * *“How does my work affect others?”*
- * *“What are the issues relevant to urban life and how might I get involved in those issues?”*
- * *“How is my life connected with the lives of my neighbors, in Chicago and elsewhere?”*

This seminar and the internship constitute 9 credits, as long as students complete a minimum of 32 hours per week at their internships and fulfill their responsibilities for the seminar. The following pages describe the requirements for the course.

II. **Course Goals:**

As a result of this course, students will be able to,

- A. Integrate the various aspects of the program by critically examining what they are learning in their classes, at their internships, and in the city.

- B. Articulate the assets and promise of a world-class urban center and understand the intersections between their lives and the lives of their neighbors in this global city.
- C. Develop professional skills as related to their particular internship and field of interest.
- D. Consider the importance of being engaged citizens in the world around them.

III. **Course Requirements:** *(More details on each assignment will be given during one of the first PG sessions)*

- A. **Internship.** Students will work at their internships 32 hours per week.
- B. **Internship Learning Contract (ILC).** Students will compose a learning contract, which serves as a job description and a tool for evaluation.
- C. **Journaling.** Students will journal about their various experiences in the CS program – their internships, neighborhood visits, and seminars – during the semester. PGLs will collect journal entries at least 3 times during the semester on days to be determined by your leader.
- D. **Urban Immersion:** PG participants will experience Chicago neighborhoods by walking the streets, conducting research, and learning with long-time community members and activists. PGLs will discuss the details of the visits with you at the beginning of the semester. You will receive time off from your internship to visit these neighborhoods.
 - 1. **Neighborhood Visits.** Participate in at least 3 NBHD visits with PG.
 - 2. **Group Presentation.** Create and organize within each PG a presentation about the NBHD your group visited during the semester, to be shared with other practicum groups.
 - 3. **Integrating Semester Experiences.** Visit at least one institution or organization in the community that is connected to your vocational area of interest. You will be asked during the final weeks of the semester to share about your experience, why you chose the particular organization to visit, and how it relates to the type of work you are interested in. This visit can include interviewing a workers or clients at the organization; students could also participate in a community activity sponsored by the organization.

IV. **Attendance:** Students must attend the following: Internship, Neighborhood Visits and Presentation, Practicum Group meetings, ILC Conference, and Midpoint and Final Evaluations. Remember that only illness or emergencies (as defined in the Chicago Semester handbook) are excused absences (and students still need to call the Chicago Semester office to let us know). Should students miss events for unexcused reasons, the student's grade will be affected.

V. **Evaluation and Grading:**

Each student will receive a letter grade derived from evaluations by both the site supervisor and the Practicum Group Leader with each carrying half the weight of the final grade.

Chicago Semester will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students can alert us in the “Additional Information” portion of the Application Form prior to their coming, or they can notify the Director privately if necessary. Students should also alert their instructors during the first two weeks of class so that accommodations can be made. For further assistance, contact Clinton Stockwell at Clintons@chicagosemester.org.

Practicum Group Evaluation (50% of Total Grade):

- 1. Practicum Group Participation (20%).** This grade will be based on the student’s participation in the weekly PG meetings, including their presence and engagement on neighborhood visits.
- 2. ILC (10%).**
- 3. Journals (30%).**
- 4. Neighborhood Visits and Final Presentation (40%).**

Site Supervisor's Evaluation (50% of Total Grade)

- 1. Mid-Point Site Evaluation.** At the midpoint students will meet with their PGL and site supervisor to discuss their internship performance.
- 2. Final Site Evaluation.** Toward the end of the internship students will again meet with their PGL and site supervisor to discuss their performance. During the meeting, students will be asked to offer a verbal self-evaluation, explaining how well they fulfilled their ILC and other goals for the internship. Students will get feedback and a grade from their site supervisor.

Internship Summary (0% of Total Grade, But...): Before students leave Chicago Semester, they must complete an Internship Summary which Judi Zink will send them by email in November. Students need to email it back to her by the end of the semester. The site supervisor will *not* see this document. It is used for recruiting and educating future students about the sites. While this summary is not graded, failure to complete it will result in Chicago Semester withholding the student’s grade. ***Seriously, we won’t give you a grade until we get this.***

PRACTICUM GROUP SCHEDULE

Part One: Introduction to Practicum Group

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Week 1: Feb. 5 th	T	Introduction to Chicago and 1 st PG Meeting: Exploring Chicago & Getting to Know Your Group, 9am-12pm
Week 2: Feb. 13 th	W	Practicum Group (PG) Meets / Sharing Stories Discussion of Internships and ILCs First Draft of Internship Learning Contracts (ILC) due to Practicum Group Leader (PGL)

Thurs/Fri. February 14th -15th : ILC Conferences with Practicum Group Leader

Week 3: Feb. 20 th	W	PG Meets Introduction to and Discussion of Neighborhood Visits Final Draft of ILC due
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Mon/Tues. February 18th -19th : ILC Conferences with Practicum Group Leader

Part Two: Engaging the City

Week 4: Feb. 27 th	W	Large Group PG Meeting / Introduction to NBHD Visits
Week 5: March 5 th	W	PG Meets Begin Neighborhood Visits (sometime this week or next)

***CS Students have Monday, 3/3 off for Pulaski Day*

Week 6: March 12 th	W	NBHD Visits & Midpoint Site Evaluations
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March 12th -26th: Midpoint Site Visits and Evaluations. When scheduling visits please be aware that CS students have Good Friday and Easter Monday off (3/21 and 3/24).

Week 7: March 19 th	W	NBHD Visits & Midpoint Site Evaluations
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***CS Students have Good Friday, 3/21, off.*

Week 8:

March 26th W Wrap-up NBHD Visits & Midpoint Site Evaluations

****CS Students have Easter Monday, 3/24, off.**

Week 9:

April 2nd W PG Meets
Discuss Presentation & Topics

Week 10

April 9th W PGs Meet as a large group to begin NBHD Presentations
(2 groups give a presentation this week during the PG time period to the other two groups that meet during their time slot – Q &A to follow)

Part Three: Integrating Experiences

Week 11:

April 16th W PG Meet as a large group to do NBHD presentations
(2 groups give a presentation this week during the PG time period to the other two groups that meet during their time slot – Q &A to follow)

Week 12:

April 23rd W PG Meets *Integrating Semester Experiences

Week 13:

April 30th W PG Meets *Integrating Semester Experiences

April 23rd – May 9th : *Final Site Visits and Evaluations (please note that you should do your evaluations on the earlier side for Hope, Aquinas, and Judson students since they leave by the 30th)

Week 14:

May 7th W PG Meets * Integrating Semester Experiences

Final day varies for graduating seniors.

****April 30: Final day for Aquinas, Hope, and Judson graduating seniors. Students must attend all classes on April 30 that may not end until 4:30.***

****May 6: Final Day for Central, Cornerstone, Dordt, and Northwestern graduating seniors. Students will work at their internship until 5:00 p.m. on May 6.***

****All other students will be done at 5:00 p.m. on May 9.***