This course is primarily designed for students who wish to acquire practical experience in a human service, political, social research, or social policy agency--private or governmental, profit or nonprofit. Some students find placements in consulting firms, law firms, or other business organizations. Some do research with a faculty member at BC, at another university, or in a social research organization in the area. In most cases these internships are unpaid and some are paid positions, but in all cases it should be viewed primarily as a learning experience. Undergraduates often take this course in their junior or senior year as a way to find out more about what it is like to work in one of the many setting that sociology majors take jobs in after graduating from college. However, some sophomores take it as well. While the course is not restricted to sociology students, non-majors should keep in mind that it is expected that sociological concepts and questions will inform the papers you write and discussion in class. To justify academic credit for this 3 credit course, written work and oral presentations will be called for in addition to the time spent and work done in connection with your actual internship placement. In class we discuss what is going on at your internship placement and we discuss a number of issues related to your eventual career plans after graduating from Boston College. If you are a graduate student, please see last page of this syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. You must Keep a journal with entries on at least a weekly basis. This journal will primarily deal with your internship experience. It must be descriptive, sociological, and analytic. An electronic copy your journal (Journal Part A) from the start of the semester through October 18 is due Monday October 21. Be sure to also include a discussion of your placement as a learning experience. Send this as a word file attachment in an email to me. Subsequently, send an electronic copy of the second half of your journal (Journal Part B) for the period from October 21 through December 11. That part of your journal is due on Monday, December 16. Again be sure to include a summary as the last entry in your journal describing what you got out of your internship experience including a discussion of what year learned about what you want or do not want in a job when you enter the workforce after finishing your education. Journal entries should average about 400 words per week. See the electronic file of notes from first day
of class for details about what to include in your journals (Part A and Part B). You are also welcome to come in to see me at any time to show me a hard copy of your journal to get feedback on the spot.

2. **You must prepare a 2,000 - 2,500 word term paper** that discusses your educational, career, and family plans between the time you graduate from Boston College and the year you turn 40. It should include your current best estimates as to when various major events in your life will ideally take place between now and age 40. It should include a discussion of how you are going to integrate your lifestyle plans (including consumption expectations, your goals with respect to free time, time for any family you anticipate at that point in life), the fit of your work plans with your values and desire for a job that involves what you consider meaningful work that contributes to society in some way, the issue of what type of preparation will be needed to get the kind of job that you want to get, a discussion how secure such a job is likely to be, the issue of vulnerability of the job to global outsourcing, and a discussion of the likely opportunities or lack there of for upward mobility in the line of work you have in mind. These are issues that I want you to discuss, but you can go on to include other related issues that you consider important as well, for example, the potential tensions you anticipate having to deal with due to goals that are likely to compete with one another. A strong paper will include effective use of sociological analysis and concepts (e.g., values, social class, social mobility, gender and family roles, etc.). Both a hard and an electronic copy of your term paper are due **December 16. The grade on the term paper will be reduced if it is late and the amount of the reduction will increase as a function of how late it is.** You must familiarize yourself with and abide by the official BC rules with respect to academic integrity. **Please spend some time checking out the information at the following website:** [http://www.bc.edu/publications/gcatalog/policy.shtml#integrity](http://www.bc.edu/publications/gcatalog/policy.shtml#integrity)

Any paper written for this course must be written by you, be original to this course, be done only for this course, and not be a revised version of a paper done for a different course. You can elect to take the course pass/fail in which case the term paper will become optional, but then the course will not count as one of 3 required upper level electives required for sociology majors; it will just be an elective course.

3. **You must attend class and participate actively in the class discussion.** This will include reports from you about your own internship, questions you ask in connection with internship reports from other students, class discussion of questions you pose to the class linked in some way to your internship, or the career related issues you will be dealing with in your term paper. We will meet as a group approximately once every other week for two hours. I will give the tentative dates for each class meeting on the first day of class. I expect to see each of you outside of class at other times on an as needed basis to privately discuss your internship placement.
4. You must spend the number of hours per week that you have agreed to work at your internship placement. I will leave it up to you and your supervisor to decide on the number of hours per week, but it must be at least 8 hours per week and in most cases that is what it will be. Some internship placements will ask for or require more than 8 hours. Some will agree to 8 hours and then push for more hours after you have been there a few weeks. Be very clear that you only have time for 8 hours per week if that is the case. To protect yourself consider writing an email to your supervisor in which you make it explicit that you have agreed to 8 hours per which is all your schedule will allow. You are strongly urged to be conservative about how many hours per week you agree to work so that you will not feel under undue pressure as the semester progresses and you have many assignments due in other courses toward the end of the semester. Do not agree to more hours than you will be able to provide during the busy weeks when taking mid-terms and toward the end of the semester.

5. At your internship placement you must obtain a field supervisor. Turn in Form B (download it from my website www2.bc.edu/~jbw) signed by your field supervisor, at the first class if possible, otherwise at our second class. There will also be a separate Form A that you will fill out providing an electronic version of some of the same information and some additional information. I will send it to you after our first class. Your field supervisor will be responsible for overseeing your work at the internship site. This person must submit a written evaluation of your work by Monday, December 16. This is to be a confidential letter to me. The best alternative is to ask your supervisor to email the confidential letter to me and then to send you an email informing you that she/he has sent the letter as an email to me. It is your responsibility to contact me to make sure that I have in fact received that e-mail letter. You cannot assume that your supervisor has sent the letter until you contact me and get confirmation from me that I have received the letter. This is important as it is common for the supervisor to forget to send the e-mail or to get too busy to send it. However, I am not in a position to give you a grade for the course until I have that letter and I do not have the time to repeatedly call your supervisor in an effort to get that letter. A second alternative is for you to hand deliver that letter to me (or to my mailbox in McGuinn 426). As stated in Form B, the letter should discuss: (1) what you did, (2) how well you performed, and (3) make suggestions for improvement.

COURSE GRADING
20% based on your Journal (Journal Part A, Journal Part 2)
40% based on your term paper
20% based on class quantity of participation and quality of contributions
20% My assessment of your internship as a learning experience (based on class, your journal, and your supervisor’s letter)

PERSONAL SAFETY:
It is very important that you discuss the issue of personal safety with me and with your field supervisor if there is any potential for personal safety problems given
the location and/or time when you will be at your internship. I will want to know what steps you are taking to assure that personal safety will not be a problem for you. If at some point during your internship you become aware that there is a problem that you were not aware of at the outset, please discuss the issue with me.

FINDING A PLACEMENT:

It is up to you to find your own placement. However, if you come in to see me, I can give you suggestions about how to find a placement that fits your needs. If you go to the Boston College Career Center, they will also be able to give you a lot of help. The address of the BC Career Center is 38 Commonwealth Ave. You may want to call ahead to find out when best to come in for help in using their resources. Some students have found good internship placements by going to Google idealist.org.

Another way to find an internship is to look at the list of prior placements that can be found on my personal website. Go first to http://www2.bc.edu/~jbw. Then go to “Courses” and then go to Sc540/Sc541 Internship List. You can just print the list provided. However, a much better alternative may be to use the database that is available through the Career Center. I would suggest that you start by spending some time on their excellent website and the database of internships available through their website. Then, I would suggest that you visit them for advice about anything related to internships, but specifically about how to go about getting accepted into an internship that will meet your needs. For example, I would not suggest that you just send out your resume to 20 agencies and wait from them to call you. Why? Because many are so busy that they will never get back to you. Also, be sure to ask questions about how long the approval process is likely to take.

HOW TO FIND AND USE THE WEB BASED LISTING OF INTERSHIPS MAINTAINED BY THE BOSTON COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

2. Then check out the “Internships” link.

When selecting any placement, be sure to ask a lot of questions about what you will actually do and what you will be able to present as the educational component of the internship experience. A lot of organizations need volunteer staff for low-level clerical work such as photocopy, filing, and filling envelopes for fundraisers. If you do not ask questions, you may end up with an internship that is not a good learning experience. You should make sure you will get a useful educational experience (in a broad sense) for the time you are going to invest. In some cases the work will be primarily low-level clerical work. That may be a big problem or it may be acceptable if it puts you in a position to have a lot of interesting discussions with professionals who are doing the kind of work that you hope to be doing a few years from now. Those informal discussions may more
than compensate for a lot of clerical work. But if those discussions are few and far between, a placement that is primarily low-level clerical work is probably not the best use of your time. Some students have had success by speaking up, asking for some more demanding tasks, or have pushed their supervisor to provide some tasks that will help make the internship more of a learning experience. With some potentially interesting placements you will find that your supervisor often does not have any work for you. If you do not speak up and ask for more work or if you do not take the initiative to find more work, it may end up being a boring placement. Ask pointed questions at the outset to make sure they will be able to keep you busy and to make sure that it is going to be a valuable learning experience. If you can talk to others who have already interned there before, I urge you to do so.

It a good idea to find your placement well before the start of the semester that you plan to take the course. For a September placement, it is best to make your arrangements before you leave for the summer vacation. For a Spring term placement it is best to do it in November or December. Some placements take several weeks for approval. It is not impossible to find a good placement during the first week of classes, but it will take a lot of effort if you do it that way. It may also limit your options as many internship slots may be filled.

If you have any question as to whether a particular internship placement would be acceptable, check with me in advance. If you review the list of past internships you should get a good idea of the range of placements that are likely to be acceptable. If you can make the case that the placement will include a learning component and that it has relevance for your future career plans, it is very likely that I will approve your choice.

What if you are a graduate student? Graduate students who take this course generally meet with me separately, sometimes as a group and sometimes individually. For graduate students the course requirements are modified to be appropriate for a graduate student and to fit the purpose of the individual internship placement. The specific requirements will be spelled out in advance in a letter of agreement prior to the start of the internship. Graduate student internships are often research internships, but they can take other forms as well, so long at the link to career goals is clearly specified.