

A Hypothetical Example of a PHIL 395 Internship

1. Relation to Career interests. Student is a philosophy major and environmental studies minor, who hopes to work in the non-profit sector on environmental issues. Student proposes an internship with Coastal Conservation League, working with staff in the “Sustainable Agriculture” area. Student has already taken one or two courses (e.g., “Environmental Ethics” and/or “Nature, Technology, and Society”) that discussed sustainable agriculture.
2. Practical details. Student will work 10 hours/week for 10 weeks. Work will include: attending meetings; site visits to local farms; background research related to a policy statement; coordinating outreach events to inform local community of CCL initiatives. (Including a letter from the site supervisor, explaining the work to be accomplished.)
3. Academic work.
 - a. Student will read Paul B. Thompson’s *The Agrarian Vision: Sustainability and Environmental Ethics* (2010, Univ. of Kentucky Press) within the first month of the internship.
 - b. Student and faculty supervisor will then identify a more specific topic to investigate. Student will develop a bibliography of philosophical work on this topic and identify three specific articles to examine in detail.
 - c. Student will meet with the faculty member at least 4 times during the semester (to discuss the book and three articles).
 - d. Student will submit:
 - i. A brief (1 page) summary of work done on-site.
 - ii. A brief report from the site supervisor assessing the quality of the intern’s work.
 - iii. Three short (3-4 page) response papers. Each paper will summarize and critically discuss one of assigned articles.
 - iv. A concluding (3-5 page) reflection, indicating what the student has learned from the internship. How has this internship affected the student’s career goals and interests? How has this work experience shaped the student’s understanding of the philosophical issues explored in the response papers.
4. Grading and Assessment. Grade will be based on the academic work submitted, though the grade will be lowered if the site supervisor’s report indicates that the student’s work did not meet expectations.
 - a. 60%: response papers
 - b. 25%: concluding reflection paper.
 - c. 15%: quality of discussion and preparation for meetings with faculty supervisor.

Comments

This sample syllabus is hypothetical, but we suspect that it illustrates the most likely strategy for relating a workplace to philosophy: a focus on applied ethics. For example, a student could intern at a law firm and write on topics in philosophy of law/legal ethics; or a student might participate in MUSC's ethics consultation service and write on medical ethics. (Philosophy faculty currently serve on this service and facilitate internships at MUSC.) The example given here focuses on environmental ethics. While these applied ethics topics will probably be numerically dominant, the potential scope of internships is much wider. For example, students interested in journalism could explore epistemological issues in journalism (e.g., issues of objectivity), or the impact of the blogosphere on the quality of political deliberation in a democratic society.