

Course Coordinator: Carol Prescott, Ph.D.

Office: SGM 934  
Office Hours: email for appointment  
Contact: cprescot@usc.edu

### Course Description

This course offers an opportunity for undergraduate psychology students to obtain intern experience in a community setting where the services are informed by psychological principles. In PSYC 391 students learn how to relate their internship experience to psychological principles and theory while receiving academic credit for a field placement. Students are supervised by an on-site professional at their placement while a USC faculty member serves as a sponsor for the internship. The primary goal is to help students acquire skills and knowledge that bridge their traditional classroom experiences and to apply psychology to activities in an applied setting.

There are four components to the 391 experience, each of which must be completed in order to receive credit.

- **The Placement:** Students will identify a volunteer [non-paid] placement at a community agency or organization that allows them to acquire applied experience in psychology. Students are expected to spend at least 40 hours per semester (average of 3 hours per week) at that site per unit of 391 credit (that is, 40 hours total for 1 unit, 80 hours for 2 units).
- **Faculty Sponsor:** Students will identify a USC faculty member to sponsor their placement. Sponsors may be faculty within the Department of Psychology, but can also be faculty who are trained as psychologists and have affiliations in other departments. A good strategy is to look at faculty webpages at research and professional specialties to find someone who is a good match for internship placement sites. Students are expected to meet every other week with their Faculty Sponsor to discuss theories and research related to their placement experiences.
- **Final Paper:** During the last week of classes, students will submit a 5-7 page paper (depending on number of units) to their Faculty Sponsor. This paper will link the field placement experiences to psychology theory, coursework, and readings assigned by the Faculty Sponsor. (Details below).
- **Orientation and Mid-Semester Sessions:** In addition to the individual meeting with Dr. Prescott at the beginning of the semester, students **are required** to attend a group Orientation Session (about the 5th week) of the semester and a Mid-Semester Session (about the 11<sup>th</sup> week). Dates and times for these sessions will be sent via email.  
[NOTE: for Summer Session students, these meetings may occur by phone or Skype]

## **Course Readings**

A Blackboard site is available to students with suggested readings. Most Faculty Sponsors and many Internship Supervisors also provide readings.

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## **Assignments**

### **1. Weekly Journal**

Students are expected to keep a weekly journal on Blackboard that records their experiences at their placements. This should include tasks, observations, and reflections/questions regarding their placement. These journal entries are expected to provide some structure for the meetings with the Faculty Sponsor and specific examples of their experiences for relating the field experience to psychological theory in the final paper. Entries do not need to be formally written, but should be entered at least weekly, preferably soon after the student has been at the site.

### **2. Final Paper. Due the last day of class (Friday, December 5) by 5 pm.**

In consultation with their Faculty Sponsor, students will develop a written plan for a 5-page paper. This paper should analyze psychological issues pertinent to the placement and relate these experiences to psychological research and theory. For example, if the placement involved working with bilingual children, the paper might address themes of language and literacy and how relevant theories and research were put into practice at the site. If the placement is at a marketing firm, the paper could discuss a specific theory of consumer behavior and relate how it is being implemented in a sales campaign. Alternatively, rather than focusing on the use of a particular intervention or theory, the paper may use experiences at the field site to explore a broader topic, such as child or adolescent development, aging, substance abuse, or marketing strategies. Overall, the final paper should integrate the weekly field notes, the assigned readings, and theory and research. The final paper should be written in APA style and include references from the research literature (journals and books) not just secondary sources.

**Submit the paper by the due date to Blackboard and send by email to your Faculty Sponsor.**

## **Grading**

The final grade will be assigned by Dr. Prescott. It will be based on the evaluation by the student's placement Supervisor (50%) and the recommendation of the Faculty Sponsor based on a combination of discussions at the mentoring meetings and final written paper (50%).

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## **Site Requirements**

You are expected to maintain a professional and helpful attitude while at your internship site. Talk to your Supervisor about expectations about how you should dress. Individual sites may have specific requirements regarding the number of hours they expect per week and the days and times that you may volunteer. If their expectations are a poor match to your availability, it is your responsibility to find this out before submitting your Psych 391 contract. Some sites may have specific requirements for training that you complete prior to beginning, such as fingerprinting, a background check, or TB testing. If these requirements are a burden for

financial or other reasons, please contact the Course Coordinator, Dr. Prescott. **Be aware that some sites require an application and orientation process, therefore please plan ahead!**

### **Course Credit**

You may enroll in 1 to 4 units. The course is repeatable for up to 4 units total. Thus, you may choose to enroll for an entire year for 1 or 2 units per semester, as some field sites may require a year's commitment. If you enroll for 1 unit of academic credit, the expectation is that you will spend 40 hours onsite at the field placement during the semester (about 3 hours per week) in addition to biweekly meetings with your Faculty Sponsor and time devoted to your written assignments. If you enroll for 2 units, the expectation is 80 hours onsite during the semester in addition to Faculty Sponsor meetings and the paper. Students requesting more than 2 units during one semester must obtain pre-approval from the course coordinator ([cprescot@usc.edu](mailto:cprescot@usc.edu)). Approval for more than 2 units will necessitate a more substantial paper or additional work product. Placements may have their own requirements about participation in training and number of hours required after training. Up to 4 units total across your time at USC can be applied to the Psychology major as an elective.

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### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

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