

AS.271.509 Applied Experience

1 credit

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Description: This course is designed to accompany a supervised environmental or sustainability-related internship or similar work experience relevant to a student's career interests. While completing 80 hours of hands-on, applied work, students will prepare a reflective journal, paper, and poster presentation about their experience. Graded S/U only.

Environmental Science and Environmental Studies (ENVS) majors are required to complete an applied experience as part of their degree. Fulfilling the requirement involves at least *80 hours* of pre-approved, supervised, environmental or sustainability-related work. The work can be paid or unpaid and can take place during the fall or spring semesters or during the summer, either at JHU or with an outside organization, either in the U.S. or abroad. In some cases, study abroad programs may offer a suitable internship experience, but prior approval is required. The work must be completed within a single semester.

During the semester in which the applied experience is undertaken and completed, the student must register for AS.271.509 Applied Experience. Credit for AS.271.509 will *not* be given retroactively for prior experiences and must be registered for concurrently with the applied experience hours worked.

This 1-credit course requires a weekly journal, documentation of hours worked, a reflection paper, and a poster presentation describing the highlights of the internship or work experience. All applied experience posters will be presented once annually during the academic year as part of a showcase of the experiences pursued by ENVS students. Poster authors are strongly encouraged to attend the presentation in order to share their experiences with attendees, but it is not required if a schedule conflict arises.

Purpose: The reason why the applied experience is required of ENVS majors is that the environmental career field is very broad and students often have difficulty narrowing down their interests in order to choose a career path. Doing an internship in the field is a great way to try out one kind of work to see how well it suits and to begin creating a network of contacts and potential future employers. It also helps to connect a student's academic work with the realities of the larger world and to give them experience working with an organization on an environmental or sustainability problem of significance.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- (1) Apply what they have learned in an academic setting to an internship or work experience.
- (2) Articulate the connections between their work with an organization and real-world issues related to the environment and/or sustainability.
- (3) Critically reflect upon their experience with regard to its effect on their academic and career trajectory and their personal role in the solution of environmental/sustainability problems.

The assignments used to document achievement of these goals are outlined below.

Weekly Journal: At some point during each week of applied experience work, create a journal entry in a single word processing document. Each entry should contain:

- Dates for the week
- A list of the hours worked and a total for the week
- A running tally of total work hours completed during the experience
- A brief description of what was done during the work hours that week (at least a paragraph)
- A brief reflection which could include comments about the nature of the work, how well it is going, how well relationships with co-workers are going, any particularly interesting or surprising moments, etc. (at least a paragraph)

There is no set length for a journal entry, so it can be as long as you want it to be. You may find that the length varies from week to week depending on what you have been doing and how much you have to say about it. Keep adding to your journal document throughout your experience with the entries placed in chronological order.

Reflection Paper: After the 80 work hours for the applied experience have been completed and before the end of the 4th day of the final exam period, a reflection paper about the experience and what was learned from it must be submitted on Blackboard. The paper text should be at least 6 pages long, double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font. The paper should include the following:

- *Experience Summary:* A summary of the work performed, what the goals were, what was accomplished, who was involved, the institution where the experience took place, and the location(s) where the work was done. The institution might be a non-profit organization, a city or state agency, a university, etc.
- *Bigger Picture:* An explanation of (A) how the experience relates to one or more environmental or sustainability issues and (B) the role and function of the institution in addressing those issues. In other words, what is the institution and its members trying to accomplish with regard to these issues? How is it going about addressing the problems? What role did you play in that bigger picture?
- *Lessons Learned:* A reflection on what you learned from the experience. Part of this section should reflect upon the bigger picture and evaluate how effective the institution, its approach, its members and projects, and your contribution is in addressing the issues. Part of this section should also explain how the experience has affected your career goals and plans. Perhaps you have found your calling, or maybe you realized that you would never want to do that job again. You may also want to discuss what you learned about how to function in the workplace, what you would have done differently if you were to undertake the experience again, or other lessons learned.

Poster: After the 80 work hours for the applied experience have been completed and before the end of the 6th day of the final exam period, a poster about the experience and what was learned from it must be submitted on Blackboard. The poster should be 36" tall × 48+" wide and created using PowerPoint. A printout of the poster is NOT required.

Poster Content – The purpose of the poster is to showcase the work that you did for your applied experience and let other JHU students and faculty know about it. Be sure to include the following information:

- How you found out about and obtained the opportunity to complete your applied experience. If applicable, include a link to a website with information about applying for the position so that other interested students could follow in your footsteps.
- A brief description of the internship experience including where you worked, who you worked with, what you did, and what the larger purpose of the project or job was within the context of the organization or institution in which you worked. For this section, you may draw upon the text you wrote for your reflection paper.
- A brief summary of the outcome of your work. Discuss what you and your team, if applicable, accomplished over the course of the term or project or time worked.
- What you learned from the experience and whether you would recommend it to others looking for an applied experience.

Grading: This course is graded S/U only. Satisfactory completion requires documentation of at least 80 hours of work and submission of weekly journal entries, a reflection paper, and a poster file that meet the above-listed specifications. Additional details about the assignment requirements and due dates are found on the Blackboard website.