Welcome! The overarching purpose of the practicum is for students to gain practical experience relevant to their SESP concentration, while making meaning of the experience through ethnographic research and reflection. Throughout the seminar we will work toward deepening understanding of various experiences – positive and negative – which will help make sense of and guide steps toward success in the world. Students will reflect on and begin to critically analyze these experiences in order to develop a toolkit of lessons that will inform personal and professional decisions and actions.

Goals for this course are as follow:

1. To develop a capacity for critical analysis of organizations and organizational processes
2. To apply ethnographic methods to understanding the workplace
3. To gain and develop a capacity for reflecting on and analyzing personal professional experiences, challenges, and successes
4. To improve observation, research, and writing skills

EXPECTATIONS & COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance and promptness at the seminar is mandatory. Arriving on time to class is important as it promotes a positive culture for a small seminar. Attendance and punctuality will be factored into your class participation grade. Email chindo@northwestern.edu before class if you will be late or absent. A valid reason for absence or tardiness (with supporting documents, if available) is required. Note that participating in a practicum site-related activity is not considered a valid reason for absences. A make-up assignment related to the theme of the missed week will be assigned.

Class Participation: The seminar is student-centered. In each class meeting, you will learn through sharing, comparing, and analyzing each other’s experiences. Be prepared to contribute to all class discussions, including the Week-in-Review. Discussions are meant to help you better understand the diversity of the experiential learning opportunities provided through the practicum, so arriving to each class meeting with questions, insights and suggested readings will enrich yours and your classmates’ experience. You may bring a laptop, tablet, or writing tools to take notes and access readings, but refrain from non-academic activities (email, social media, etc.)
Grading: A single combined grade will be assigned for the Practicum and the Practicum Analysis Seminar (4 credits total). All assignments for seminar should be typed in Word (.doc/.docx), double-spaced, 12-inch font, 1” margins, and uploaded to Canvas, unless otherwise noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practicum: The portion of your grade relating to the Practicum itself will be based on the evaluation of the practicum site and site supervisor's midterm and final evaluations.</th>
<th>15%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Participation:</strong> The class participation component of your grade will be based on attendance and promptness and active participation in discussions and other in-class activities.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field Notes and Memos</strong></td>
<td>Expectations for field notes and memos, the interview project, and the final project are described in more detail in other sections of the syllabus and will be further discussed in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Project</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Project</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
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Late Assignments: To be fair to all students, any late assignments will be docked the equivalent of one half-grade (e.g. B+ to a B) for each 24-hour period delay in submission. Assignments submitted after seven (7) days beyond the stated deadline may receive a fail grade.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, “Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide.” Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html

Accessible NU: Students requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition are required to register with AccessibleNU (847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU. All information will remain confidential. For more information, visit https://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/

FIELD NOTES

Field notes are due each week Thursday by 11:59pm, including the first week (due April 4th), uploaded to Canvas. Also, always have a copy of your field note accessible for class discussions.

Your role in the practicum is that of participant observer. In organizational life, those who are most successful and eventually become leaders are those who not only experience and react to people and events in the organization, but also objectively observe and reflect on the broader systems of the organization and initiate changes to those systems for improving the organization. Keeping field notes will provide you with a systematic means for impartially observing and recording details of your organization. You will also have opportunities to reflect subjectively on patterns you detect within your organization and related issues by writing analytical notes within your daily notes. You will need to quote from your field notes in the final paper, so it is important that they provide evidence that you can draw upon. Low-quality field notes about organizational aspects of your site may hinder your ability to write a high-quality final paper.
### Guidelines for Daily Field Notes:

1. Notes should be recorded each day immediately after work and/or during breaks. Good field notes record details as accurately as possible. Letting too much time pass may have an impact on the accuracy of your notes.

2. Typed field notes are **required** and need to be uploaded to Canvas each week Thursday by 11:59pm. Use consecutive page numbers beginning with the first set of notes, marked with the week, last name, followed by the page number (e.g. Week 1, Hindo, Page 1, Week 1, Hindo, Page 2...). Each week, restart format (e.g. Week 2, [last name], page number...)

3. Feedback will periodically be provided but can also be given upon request.

4. It is expected that students will have 2-3 pages of field notes per day (8-12 pages/week). Do NOT write in a stream-of-consciousness style, but rather in paragraphs for better flow or your narrative.

5. Observations are meant to be free of subjectivity. **Describe. Don’t interpret. Don’t evaluate.** However, in the section “Analytical Notes,” instances in which you may use and identify subjective statements within your notes are explained.

6. Be mindful of adjective use; they may be evaluations in disguise (e.g. Write *Mr. Red shirt slammed his fist on Ms. K’s desk, said “Damn it!” in a volume louder than he had been speaking, and slammed the door as he exited her office* instead of writing, *Mr. Red Shirt angrily walked out of the office.*)

7. Don’t summarize discussions; paraphrase (i.e. rephrase/reword to clarify statements.

8. Each week provide a brief “cast of characters,” with non-identifiers, as well as an indication of their role in the organization (please note if they are your supervisor). **Always use pseudonyms.** This is VERY important as your observations may involve sensitive matters and a colleague may inadvertently come across your notes.

9. Treat field notes as raw data, which will inform the development of the final paper.

### Analytical Notes:

1. Beginning Week 2 include “AN” to denote subjective comments to set them apart from your objective observations. AN statements or questions may be recorded in parentheses, brackets, italics, or a different text color, etc., with "AN" preceding them. But please **be consistent** with how you choose to denote them in notes.

2. Use these AN to record briefly your emotional responses, to keep track of your questions, to draw connections with concepts from your classes and outside readings, to note the kernel of a thought you’d like to develop in your analysis, or to mark a topic you’d like to bring up during week-in-review discussion.
Field Note Memos: Twice during the quarter, you will create Field Note Memos, which are meant to help you pull together and reflect upon some of the major themes that have emerged from your field notes. These will serve as a starting point in which to construct ideas for your final project. The memo is where you can explore your ideas about relationships, develop (or reject) linkages, work through emerging hypotheses and theories, and consider the ways in which you are seeing themes or issues emerge from your experience as it is reflected in your field notes.

Memo Write Up: The memo is a critical analysis and discussion of your data/observations. The memo is a place for you to:

- Critically engage with the data
- Show evidence of thoughtful and substantive theorizing
- Conduct deep and productive reflection
- Integrate thoughts and ideas from field notes, thus being cumulative in nature

There is no required format for the memos. You are free to write in whatever style you find most useful (e.g. bullet points, paragraphs, etc.) but each memo should be 1-2 pages in length. Assessment will be based on content and evidence of critical thinking.

INTERVIEW PROJECT

The interview project consists of two (2) interviews with subject matter experts working in your field of interest. The first interview is conducted with someone from your practicum site serving in a leadership role. The second interview will be with someone outside of the organization, but in a related career or organization, possibly someone referred to you by the first interviewee or other connections you have made (but no interviews with friends or family, please!).

Contact each person ahead of time and make sure they set aside at least one hour to meet with you. A good tip is to plan for 30 minutes but expect each interview to last for up to an hour. Asking interviewees to refer you to relevant professional readings (books, journals, and articles) is useful, as they may serve as references for your final paper. Use this as an opportunity to expand your professional network! Sample interview questions will be discussed in class.

Interview Write Up: In writing up your interviews, emphasize what you learned about the interviewees’ career pathways and the field in general (investigate how and why these two people came to be in their positions and advice about working in the field) and compare the perspectives of your interviewees. Describe (a) the impact of the interview on your future plans, (b) what was useful about having this kind of discussion with a potential colleague, and (c) any insights you might have gained in relation to your field placement.

Each interview paper should be 4-5 pages in length. Include page numbers to help with analysis for future assignments and the final paper.
FINAL PROJECT

Throughout the quarter, organizational themes or issues should emerge in your observations and reflections on your field site. Your final project will focus on one of these topics and will consist of (a) a proposal, (b) a research paper, and (c) an in-class presentation.

**Paper Proposal:** You will develop a research study that flows out of your experience and field notes. To help you finalize your final paper plans you will submit a proposal which is a project outline describing your paper’s structure, central argument(s), and theories you intend to build upon. The paper proposal is required so you may receive feedback to inform your final paper and presentation. The proposal should consist of:

1. Defining your topic by identifying a problem issue, theme or concern from your practicum experience which you intend to explore and research;
2. Noting any hypotheses you have regarding the topic. Discuss how you will go about understanding the issue—what factors are important and how do you know these factors are the key to understanding;
3. Identifying any new areas will you need to explore (people to talk to, literature on the topic or problem, etc.) in the remaining weeks.

**Final Paper:** Your final paper will examine one of the emerging themes or issues grounded in your field notes and supported by memos, interviews, and other sources you intend to use to develop a clear picture of your topic. Papers should be a minimum of 10 pages. More information about the final paper will be provided in class.

**Project Presentation:** Our last class meeting will take the form of a Presentation Expo. Each student will deliver a 10-minute presentation summarizing their practicum experience and highlighting findings from their final paper. Students will also participate in a feedback roundtable for each other’s presentations. Creativity is a plus!

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**COURSE TEXTS**

Due to the immersive nature of the practicum experience, this course is designed not to be reading intensive in the traditional sense. However, selected readings that focus on looking at organizational structures and interactions in different ways have been chosen and one book is required (accessible in your chosen format): Spradley, J.P. (1980; 2016 reissue). *Participant Observation*. Australia: Waveland Press.

Aside from Spradley and other readings, field notes will serve as a primary “text” by which students will analyze and discuss personal recorded experiences at practicum sites. Before each class, you are expected to have thoroughly read ALL assigned texts and/or viewed assigned multi-media and come to class having thought about how they might apply to your experiences. Readings and multi-media are available on Canvas. PLEASE NOTE: “Read” = read completely and “SR” = skim read are noted in the *Course Schedule & Assignment Deadlines* section of the syllabus.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date &amp; Theme</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Tasks &amp; Milestones</th>
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</table>
| **WEEK 1** <br> April 5: Ethnography in the Workplace | In class:  
• Introductions  
• Syllabus  
• Week-in-Review*  
• Refresher on writing field notes | For next class:  
Gather organizational documents (e.g. mission statement, annual report, organizational chart, other relevant documents) |
| **WEEK 2** <br> April 12: Organizational Culture | In class:  
**Bring:** Organizational documents  
Before class:  
• **SR:** Spradley, *Participant Observation*. (Part One, Ch 1 and Ch 3)  
• **Read:** Spradley, *Participant Observation*. (Part Two, Step 3)  
• **Read:** *New Yorker. Improving Workplace Culture, One Review at a Time*  
• **Watch/Listen:** *IdeoU. This is the Way Google & IDEO Foster Creativity.* | For next class:  
Bring a floor plan of the physical workspace of your practicum site (hand-drawn or photos) |
| **WEEK 3** <br> April 19: Design and Space | In class:  
**Bring:** Workspace floor plan  
Before class:  
• **SR:** Saval. *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace* (Chapter 6)  
• **Read:** Spradley, *Participant Observation*. (Part Two, Step 4, Step 5, Step 6) | Due:  
Memo #1 |
| **WEEK 4** <br> April 26: Diversity in the Workplace | In class:  
**Guest speaker:** Nathan Frideres, Coordinator of the Field Studies Program  
Before class:  
• **Watch:** *Lorenzo. How diversity makes teams more innovative*  
• **Read:** McKinsey & Company. *Diversity Matters*  
• **Read:** *The Economist. Racial Diversity: There’s More Work to be Done in the Workplace* | |
| **WEEK 5** <br> May 3: Communication in the Workplace | Before class:  
• **SR:** Stone & Heen, *Thanks for the Feedback* (Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2)  
• **Read:** Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Part Two, Step 8, Step 9, Step 10) | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Before class</th>
<th>For next class</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Teams, Collaboration &amp; Conflict</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> <a href="#">New York Times. Why Some Teams are Smarter than Others</a></td>
<td><strong>Coding scheme plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interview Project #1</strong> (due May 12 @ 11:59pm) <strong>Practicum Mid-term Evaluation</strong> (by 9am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Happiness in the Workplace</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> <a href="#">New Yorker. Groupthink</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Memo #2</strong> <strong>Project Proposal (May 19 @ 11:59pm)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> <a href="#">Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley, Happiness at Work Quiz</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interview Project # 2</strong> (May 26 @ 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Departing the Practicum Site</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> <a href="#">IdeoU. Why Leadership is Not About Having All the Answers</a></td>
<td><strong>Presentations!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practicum Site Final Evaluation</strong> <strong>Course Evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Presentation Expo</td>
<td><strong>Wrap up!</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Paper Due June 11 by 2pm</strong></td>
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*Week-in-Review is a weekly activity.

NOTE: Week 6 seminar will be held on the Chicago campus in Wieboldt Hall, Room 509, 10am-12pm. A site supervisor reception follows the class meeting at 12pm.