

Preparing for HDF 4991: Capstone Senior Internship Course  
Service-Learning Course Designed for 3 Credits Each of Fall and Spring Senior Year  
Revised 01/22/26

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This document has been developed to help students prepare for HDF 4991 and especially to help students identify an appropriate internship placement. The general information provided here is typical of what the course is designed to do, the different course requirements, and the expected hours of work. Specifics about the actual course any one student will take may vary as the course develops/changes each semester/year.

## **Course Overview**

HDF 4991: Internship, is the senior capstone course in the HDFS major. It is unique in that it combines students' extensive and direct involvement in an approved on-site supervised work experience with a structured academic learning plan directed by a core HDFS faculty member. That is, the course has two essential components:

- (1) A **student-established** and **Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor** approved direct onsite supervised internship site in an HDFS-related agency, organization, or program; or with a legislator's office, legal or criminal justice organization, policy focused organization, or other professional organization working on HDFS-related issues and doing HDFS-related work. More information about what we mean by an Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor approved student-established site is provided later in this document.
- (2) **Critical Reflection**: While engaging in an appropriate Internship is necessary and required for success in this course, also required is regular and varied forms of critical reflection about your direct Internship experiences; the HDFS profession; the HDFS academic discipline; and yourselves as developing HDFS professionals and individuals. Such reflections will be done individually and at times with each other (especially during seminar meetings). The quality and quantity of critical reflection about these issues as evidenced through required assignments and class participation provide the basis for your course grade.

**Course Pre-Requisites**: This is the capstone course in the HDFS Major and as such, all required introductory and intermediate-level HDFS courses are pre-requisites, along with the required Research Methods course. In addition, a grade of "C" or higher in all HDFS courses is required, indicating an appropriate level of success for moving forward in the HDFS Major. There are other non-course pre-requisites specific to this unique internship course that are discussed later in this document but are briefly named here: Students must not be on academic probation or trial; and students must have demonstrated professionalism in how they handled their coursework and in their dealings with UVM faculty, especially HDFS faculty.

**Required and Expected # of Credits and Timing for This Course**: A total of six credits of HDFS 4991 are required. Students are required to complete three credits in the fall of Senior Year and the other three credits in the spring of Senior year. This two-semester experience offers students sufficient time to really become a part of an organization and get to know the rhythms of social service work; develop and have opportunities to apply newly developed skills and new

and deepening academic knowledge to practice; and practice applying knowledge and insights gained from experience to inform their understanding of related research and theory in HDFS. The two semesters of this Capstone course also allow the academic demands to be spread across a longer period of time, making it more likely that students will be successful.

The two semesters of HDF 4991 are linked, but students will receive a grade at the end of each semester based on the work completed during that semester. Students must succeed in the first semester –academically and with respect to professional performance—to be eligible to take the second semester. Work in the second semester builds upon the work from the first semester; success is measured in terms of academic requirements and professional performance/behavior. Because of this, and to deepen student learning and skill development, students are expected to remain in the same placement across both semesters. Students who need or wish to switch placements may be accommodated, but such students should note that additional work will be required to be prepared to engage in the second-semester requirements that build upon first-semester assignments.

### **How Do I Get an Override So I Can Enroll in This Course?**

*Students must be HDFS Majors with Senior Standing and have completed all required introductory and intermediate-level HDF courses with a grade of “C” or higher, indicating an expectation of success in this capstone-level course. Students must also have completed the required Research Methods course.*

In addition, because *HDFS Program Faculty* members are committed to ensuring that students understand the expectations of the Internship course and that they understand the kinds of placements that are and are not appropriate, ***each student is required to participate in a HDFS 4991 Planning Session prior to registration.*** After such participation, students who have thus far met all course-prerequisites and grade minimums will be given permission to enroll in the course.

Note: We expect students to do everything they can to attend one of two sessions (one in person, one remote) that will be held early in the Spring semester for juniors who are planning to take the course the following academic year. If this is absolutely not possible, the student will need to make alternative arrangements to learn about the course requirements and expectations through a one-on-one meeting with the instructor.

### **How Do I Get Permission to TAKE This Course?**

*Being given permission to enroll in this course is not the same as being given permission to take this course.* Recall that for this course there are unique pre-requisites besides successful completion of HDFS required courses at the grade of C or higher. Some of the pre-requisite information won’t be available until after the end of the Spring semester Junior year (e.g., grades in HDFS required courses), and in some cases even until the end of the summer (e.g., completing a pre-requisite course, finding out whether a student is on academic trial). Thus, students should be aware that an override into the course (permission to enroll) as previously described does not indicate permission to actually take the course.

The course instructor will consult with HDFS Program Faculty and CESS Student Services to consider various aspects of a student’s record as it is through the summer before the internship starts, in order to determine whether permission to take this course will be given. We as HDFS

Program Faculty take very seriously two goals in determining permission to take the course for each student:

- 1) the student and the sponsoring internship site have a positive experience working together, and
- 2) the reputation of the HDFS program and the reputation of HDFS students are enhanced through every HDFS student's internship performance.

***For these reasons, Program Permission to begin the course in the Fall semester involves a consideration of the following factors, in addition to course pre-requisites and minimum grades:***

- The student must be in good academic standing (not on academic trial or probation).
- The student should have demonstrated professionalism through their course work and interactions with Program Faculty; for example, the student should have a record of completing work in prior courses on time. The student should also have consistently evidenced responsibility in attending meetings and fulfilling other course, program, and university level responsibilities.

***In addition, students are expected to attend the final presentations by current Seniors in HDF 4991 towards the end of the spring semester of Junior year.*** Information about these presentations will be sent out in the latter part of the spring semester Junior year. If it is not possible for a student to attend (e.g., the student is studying abroad), the student should make alternative arrangements with the HDF 4991 course instructor to learn about current placements and student experiences and projects.

***Other requirements identified by the academic instructor or program faculty may apply.***

The above refers to permission to take the first semester of HDF 4991. Instructor and Program Permission to continue in the internship and the course for Spring semester depends upon performance in the course during the fall semester, and continued meeting of the standards as considered for enrolling in the fall semester. Also considered will be the extent to which and quality with which students have met the professional requirements expected of them at their placements/by their community partners

## **How Do I Find an Internship Placement, When do I Need One and When Do I Need to Start in the Field?**

- 1) Searching for Placement Possibilities: Students are expected to begin thinking about internship interests and possibilities with their Academic Advisors during Fall of Junior year, and to begin searching for possible placements in earnest starting early in the Spring semester Junior year.
- 2) Finding a Placement: Students are expected to find possible Internship Placements and get an offer to serve as an Intern as soon as possible during Spring semester Junior year. It's important to note that most HDFS Faculty, including the Course Instructor for HDF 4991, are only on 9-month contracts, so the whole process of finding a placement and

getting it approved (see next Getting a Placement Approved) should wrap up before the end of May.

- 3) Getting a Placement Approved: Your placement is not finalized until the Course Instructor approves it. There will be a form for you to fill out in which you respond to various questions so the Instructor can evaluate your potential placement's appropriateness as an internship site. More information on what makes a placement appropriate is provided in the next main section. Per HDFS Program Policy, students must have an established and approved placement by the end of the first week of classes (the first Friday, regardless of when in the week classes start).
- 4) Starting in the Field: Per HDFS Program Policy, students must be in the field engaging in regular internship hours no later than the end of the second week of classes (on or before the second Friday of the semester). **Note that if the placement requires a background check, it is important to establish your placement as early as possible and definitely earlier than these final due dates, because wait time for background checks can be long.** Waiting until the start of the semester to do a background check likely means delaying the internship start date beyond what is required.

Note: Besides background checks, there may be other professional requirements a placement/community partner has that must be met for students to be able to intern at a particular site and start at that site. Each student is responsible for finding out what these are and taking care of any pre-placement requirements.

## **What Questions Do HDFS Faculty Ask About a Possible Placement Before Approving it (or not)?**

The main questions the Academic Instructor will ask to determine whether a possible internship placement is appropriate/acceptable is whether the placement is expected to allow you to bring an HDFS lens to the work and whether this lens is able to be supported by your identified supervisor. Specifically, the Academic Instructor will consider whether and to what extent the placement and anticipated experiences as part of the placement are expected to:

- (1) provide you with substantive and varied opportunities for doing HDFS-related work that allows you to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the HDFS discipline and what it means to work in the field of HDFS;
- (2) offer you a diversity of opportunities to learn about, practice and develop skills useful to HDFS professionals;
- (3) place your learning and professional development at the center of the experience such that your assigned tasks and responsibilities change as your academic learning and professional and personal development needs change, and as your skills develop
- (4) be both sufficiently supportive and challenging such that you are able to continue to learn and develop throughout two semesters;
- (5) offer you a qualified professional to serve as your Internship Supervisor who is willing and able to work with you and serve as your Internship Supervisor. Qualifications we look for include a mix of advanced education (preferably a Masters' degree in an HDFS related field) and professional experience that positions the Supervisor to support your learning and development through the Internship, and for supporting you in applying an HDFS perspective to your work in the field.

(6) Whether and to what extent your Internship is likely to work as a Service-Learning experience where you engage in meaningful and significant work that contributes to the HDFS-related work of your organization/program at the same time as it offers you appropriate work experiences that are likely to further your own learning and development especially through gaining HDFS-related knowledge and developing as an HDFS professional.

## **How Do I Get Instructor Approval of the Placement I've Found?**

Students are expected to stay in touch with their Academic Instructor as they work to find a placement during the Spring semester prior to the Internship course. Once you find a placement that looks like it will work for you, you should fill out the form you were given a link to during the Internship Pre-Registration Planning Meeting. In this form, students will provide information about their possible placement and respond to some questions explaining why the students think the anticipated placement and expected experiences meet the criteria for an appropriate placement. In responding to these questions, students should keep in mind the six main questions HDFS Program Faculty ask in determining whether to accept a placement for HDF 4991.

As long as the answers to the six main questions above are sufficient, you will be allowed to complete your Internship almost anywhere that will afford you the opportunity to work with people in a responsible position, where you will have adequate supervision, and where you can schedule sufficient hours to meet the requirements of the course. HDFS students have done their Internships in a wide variety of settings, a sampling of which is listed in a separate document.

**A NOTE ABOUT INTERNING AT A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT:** Students may be paid for their internship hours. The factors that will be considered when approving such a placement are described in the next section.

## **What Kinds of Placements are Best to Avoid?**

Over the years, we have identified some common pitfalls –placements that have not worked out in some way, shape or form.

- Small Settings/One Person Operations: An Internship that involves your working with one client in a small organization or with one professional in an independent practice is unlikely to be approved because of the risk this entails to you as a student. As an example, the one person who serves as your supervisor could get sick and be unable to work or could close their practice midway through your internship, leaving you with no placement mid-way through the internship course.
- Interning at a Place of Work: We do allow students to be paid for work hours that are also counted as internship hours (more on this later). A problem arises, however, if the work has specified activities and assignments that cannot be changed in response to the student's growing knowledge, interests and skills. This is most likely to happen when the work came first and an internship is added on top of it, but it can happen when both work and internship are started at the same time. The challenge with combining work and internship is that the central focus must remain on the student's learning and development needs. If the work can't be changed to accommodate the student's learning and development needs, the work setting is not likely to be an appropriate Internship site. A key question to ask in this situation is whether your employer is willing to change your work to accommodate your learning and personal and professional development needs,

rather than assign you tasks based predominantly upon the needs of the organization or work site.

- Interning at a Place You are Already VERY Familiar With: Initial assignments for this course typically involve first impressions of your organization and supervisor. They also typically have you tracing the development of your comfort level, relationships, understanding of the organization and the like, over time. While having volunteered in a setting once a week prior to interning may still support this kind of reflection as you learn more about the organization, if you are already very familiar and comfortable with both the site and your supervisor, it may not be the best internship placement for you. It's possible, but you will need to make the case to the Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor for why this is an appropriate learning and development setting for you. For example, will you be able to have a different role in the organization or serve in a different setting?
- Interning at a Place Where Regular Contact with the Same People is Unlikely and/or Your Internship Activities are Typically the Same Without Deepening in Challenge: Placements can work even when you typically interact with different people every day and where your work does not vary. But a greater onus tends to be placed on you in these cases to find things to think about and try out, and to come up with different ways to approach the same situation. Examples of sites that have worked well at times and not worked well at other times are "Ronald McDonald House" and "Art from the Heart." In both cases, students may not have much opportunity to build relationships or observe development because of the limited time available for interaction with clients (usually over a very short period of time). If you are considering these sites, do talk with students who have had these internships and discuss this further with the Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor.

### **How Do I Get Started Looking for Placements? Where Do I Start?**

We already explained when students should start thinking about internships (fall semester Junior year) and searching for internships (spring semester Junior year). But how do you get started figuring out what possibilities are out there and what you might be interested in? Some students know years in advance what kind of internship they want or what population they want to work with while others start out with few ideas. We recommend that you think about what kinds of experiences you want to have that will be facilitated by the class structure and an Internship Supervisor. Do you want to get a head start on your professional development in the area you want to work or do you want to do an internship in this area to confirm that you want to do this work? Are you looking to have a unique experience that you don't plan to follow up on in your work life but that you are interested in and want to contribute to now?

If you are looking for ideas of placements to consider, try the following:

- Review the list of student placements over the years that we have available on the HDFS Website.
- Check UVM's Career Center's [Handshake](#) platform designed to connect students to internship options among other things, to see what internships are available.
- Browse United Way of Northwest Vermont's website; this is a good place to check to see what organizations are looking for volunteers; often if they are looking for volunteers, they will also be interested in taking on an intern.
- Browse the web more generally and check out particular organizations you have heard about or might be interested in interning with, and see what they say about volunteer

recruitment.

At the Internship Pre-Registration Planning Meeting, you will get additional information about how to search for placements, and get a link to the most up to date list of placements that students in the last few years have actually had, along with the names of their supervisors when available.

If you are unsure of a direction you want to go or the type of placement you might want, make an appointment with your academic advisor and/or the Academic Instructor for HDFS 4991 to discuss your interests, strengths, curiosities, hopes and dreams for careers, etc. We can help you identify possible directions to pursue.

Depending on the Academic Instructor, additional materials may be distributed for students to review as they work to identify and begin to design their internship experience, including

- Service-Learning Contract: The contract (or a draft of it) that you will be expected to complete as one of the first assignments in the course, may be provided for you to examine. The draft and final versions are to be developed by the student in consultation with the Internship Supervisor and with the Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor. All three people must sign the contract/approve of the final version.
- Defining/Understanding Service Learning Reading: Ash, S. L., & Clayton, P. H. (2009). Introduction to service learning. In *Learning through critical reflection: A tutorial for service-learning students*. Raleigh, NC: PHC Ventures.

### **What Do I Do After Identifying Possible Placements I'm Interested In?**

Once you identify possible placement sites:

- Explore the public face of these sites if you haven't already. Focus on learning about the organization how it works with volunteers, student interns, etc.
- Identify the contact person for Internships (often this is the Volunteer Coordinator, but some places have a separate person in charge of internships).
- Consider reaching out and schedule an informational/exploratory phone interview to learn about internship possibilities at particular sites.

Once you know you are interested in a particular placement/site, set up an interview with the appropriate person. Keep in mind that you are both likely using this interview to learn more about each other and to determine whether there is a good match between you. Your interviewer will want to learn what you have to offer, and what you are hoping to get from the experience.

Meanwhile, you will want to learn what the organization would want from you and what learning experiences can be offered. Ask such questions as:

- What would be my responsibilities as an intern?
- What am I likely to get to do in the setting?
- What am I likely to have the opportunity to learn about in terms of HDFS?
- What professional skills or personal skills am I likely to have the opportunity to develop?
- What kind of training would the organization provide me?

- What kind of supervision would be available? [Note that you need to have a direct supervisor who can guide you in your work and give you feedback about your work. There are other requirements about who the supervisor can be, described later in this document.]
- Who might my supervisor be?
- What schedule would you expect and how much flexibility do we have in scheduling my weekly hours?
- Ask about anything else that would help you understand what you would be doing at the site/for the organization and what you would be likely learning through the experience.

In preparation for an interview:

- Consider having a cover letter and a resume to submit at this time or as follow-up.
- Be sure you understand the requirements of the Internship course, especially the number of hours per week you will be required to put in (see this information later in this Planning Guide) AND know the number of hours per week you would be willing to put in should the organization's need be greater than what is required. It is also helpful to have a tentative schedule for when you can complete your hours.
- Be prepared to identify the personal and professional skills and HDFS knowledge you'll be bringing to the Internship, and to explain the personal and professional skills and HDFS knowledge you hope to gain from the Internship.
- Be prepared to describe the HDFS major and the Internship requirement to potential Internship Supervisors as they may not know what HDFS is or what it would mean for them to take on an HDFS major for an Internship. Potential supervisors may especially want to know what would be expected of them. Towards this end, you should convey the expectation that they would offer you professional development and training opportunities, as well as guidance and feedback about your work, provide feedback to you at least at mid-semester and the semester's end, but that they would not be expected to read your papers or be involved in the grade you earn for the course itself.
- Think about the kind of work/Internship setting that might be best for you, as well as the kind of supervision you are hoping for.

Note: Don't make a commitment to an Internship at the interview itself if you are offered it. Allow yourself time to think and evaluate this opportunity in relation to other options; this also allows you to confirm with your Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor that the Internship is appropriate! You could explain that you have to discuss your plans with the HDF 4991 Internship Course Instructor before you can make a commitment. Be sure to get the contact person's full name and telephone number, and, if possible, the name and background (education, years of experience) of your likely Internship Supervisor. (A resume would be great and is required at the start of the fall semester so getting it early can be helpful.) Also gather any information the agency might have available to help you better understand the work of this agency and the learning opportunities likely available for you. Find out as well if there is a timeline on their end for getting back to you.

Sometimes it becomes clear during the interview that the agency cannot use you, or that you are not qualified to do what they need. In these cases, use the interview to broaden your network of possibilities: Ask for their ideas about other opportunities that might be available. Where else do they think you might find good experience?

After each interview, discuss your experiences with various others who might help you determine whether a particular Internship is likely a good fit for you. Also, send a letter of thanks to each person you met with, and, if you're sure you ARE or ARE NOT interested, let them know this as well. Be sure to do this within any time frame that was identified for their decision.

- If you do get an offer that you want to accept, do so verbally (after having taken some time away to think about it), and follow up with a written letter of acceptance. Write down in this letter what your agreement is. Do letters of regret to any other sites if you haven't already.

### **What are the Next Steps After Attaining an Internship and It's Been Approved?**

Once you have an internship offer and it has been approved as a placement for you, aim to complete whatever needs to be completed ASAP so that you are ready to start in the field the first week of the semester. This typically includes various paperwork, some training (some may happen after you start) and a **Background Check**. The latter can take a while, so don't wait until the start of the semester to find out if this is needed and get started on it.

NOTE: If you anticipate any problems with your background check, discuss this with your Academic Instructor/Faculty Supervisor ASAP. You may need to tailor your Internship search to sites willing and able to accept students with the background check issue(s) you have.

Another thing you might start developing before the start of the semester is the first draft of the Service-Learning Contract. This will help you ensure that your Internship Supervisor is aware of your ideal learning and development goals and that the responsibilities/tasks they imagine you taking on will work to support these goals.

### **Key Additional Information about the HDF 4991 Course: How it Operates, Your Role as a Student, and How You Will Be Graded**

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HDF 4991 is a senior capstone course and thus the demands and expectations are at their highest for you as a graduating senior in HDFS, in terms not just of amount but also quality of work.

### **There are three key people available to support your success in this course:**

1. *Internship (AKA Site) Supervisor:* Each student has an *Internship Supervisor* – a professional working in the setting where you complete your Internship who has the higher education and professional training/experience to be able to serve as a mentor to you while you are at the site, teaching you how to do the work you are asked to do and helping you develop the skills and attitudes you need to do the assigned work. This Internship Supervisor also must be willing to tailor your work expectations and learning opportunities so that you are able to continue to learn and grow throughout the Internship period. Overall, this Supervisor must center your learning and development even as the work you do supports their work and contributes to the organization. The Internship Supervisor is also the person you go to if you have questions about the work itself.
2. *Faculty Supervisor (AKA Academic Instructor):* Each student also has a *Faculty*

*Supervisor/Academic Instructor* who is responsible for supporting and assessing your learning through this experience and the connections you make between your Internship experiences and HDFS (including prior and concurrent course work in HDFS and related fields, the HDFS profession, and scholarly and professional literature). This Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor is also the person you go to when you have questions about and for support of the academic work for this course, and if you have problems in your placement that your Internship Supervisor can't help you with.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Internship and Faculty Supervisors/Academic Instructors are both important resources for identifying and discussing direct Internship-related issues, fostering your critical reflections about your Internship experiences, and identifying and discussing relevant scholarly and professional readings that will deepen your knowledge and understanding of your Internship experiences. Both Supervisors will also offer you evaluations of your work. But your Internship Supervisor's evaluations will serve as an opportunity for you to learn about yourself as a professional in this setting. These will also serve to document that you have met your agreed upon internship responsibilities and hours. Provided you have met the required expectations for the internship experience, evaluations may be considered as part of determining the class participation portion of your course grade. That, and the whole of your grade, is determined by the Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor based upon your performance on academic assignments and in accordance with the academic syllabus for the course.

3. *Student Participant:* The third central person involved in this Internship is you, the student. While your Internship and Academic Supervisors are available to support you, each in our own way and within our assigned roles, it is you, the student, who is responsible for identifying and establishing an appropriate site for your Internship that is aligned with your own professional, academic, and personal learning goals. You are the one who will be working directly at your site and studying what you are working at. You are the one responsible for seeking out learning opportunities and support throughout your time in the field so that you continue to be challenged to learn and grow. Finally, you are the one who determines and then subsequently pursues areas of knowledge or skills you need to develop so as to improve your ability to be successful at the work site and as you critically reflect upon your experiences in relation to HDFS knowledge, theory, and practice.

### **Expected Hours of Work Per Week**

In order to explain the expected hours of work per week in this course, it is necessary to define the credit hour.

*Defining the Credit Hour.* The definition of a credit hour at UVM is “1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and **a minimum of two hours** [bold added] of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or 2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in point (1) of this definition for other academic activities... including internships, practica...” etc.

### *Applying this Credit Hour Definition to the Internship.*

UVM identifies a **minimum** of two hours out of class per 1 hour in class per each credit, for a MINIMUM total of 3 hours of a student's time expected per credit to be earned. Thus:

- In a three-credit course, students are expected to put in a MINIMUM of 9 total hours per week (including in-class time).
- In a four-credit course, students are expected to put in a MINIMUM of 12 total hours per week (including in-class time).

It is important to note that UVM defines 2 hours out of class time as the **minimum per credit hour**. This means that instructors may expect more than this minimum number of hours from students. For HDF 4991, it has been common for students to need to put in 2 ½ to 3 hours of work for every 1 credit, making for a total of 10 ½ to 12 hours a week on average during the semester (including in-class time).

### **Expected Total Distribution of Hours**

For each 3-credit HDF 4991 course, the expected 10 ½ to 12 hours of work for the course per week over a typical 15- week semester is expected to be distributed as follows:

- Class Meeting Time: ~2 hours a week
- ACADEMIC RELATED REQUIREMENTS: ~2 ½ to 4 hours per week
- Direct Internship Hours: 6 hours a week

NOTE: Students are expected to schedule to be in the field at least **6 hours** a week across **two times** a week in the field. This would take students, after 15 weeks, to 90 hours of direct internship work. Built into this schedule is room for exceptions (e.g., a whole week off for UVM vacation, and additional days off for placement closures, snow days, sick days, or personal days) while still setting students up to reach the minimum required 75 hours in the field per semester.

ALSO NOTE: The academic work hours is an estimate. How much time the academic related work takes varies GREATLY by student, depending on your incoming academic skills, professional experiences, personal development, and more generally how long it takes you to read and understand empirical journal articles and write scholarly/professional level papers, etc. Some students may also need to meet more with the Faculty Supervisor/Academic Instructor and use other important resources such as the Writing Center and Reference Librarians to support their academic success.

### **Academic Requirements and Grading**

Three credits of HDF 4991 may best be thought of as requiring at least the equivalent amount of time and effort as one 3000 level seminar course. Yet in contrast with seminar courses, the focus of the course itself in terms of the content and issues you will be examining are not pre-selected for you by the instructor. There may be some required readings focused on key developmental and contextual issues, and to support your success in your internship and with the various specific academic assignments. But most of the readings you will do for this class will be ones you select to read about. In addition to these readings, your time in the field itself serves as the major course text—that is, your placement is the source that will provide you with the most information upon which your learning will be based. But just as simply reading a text does not in itself lead to or demonstrate learning, you do not learn, nor do we accept demonstration of learning simply because you complete the required hours in the field. Learning comes from what you do with your experiences—what meaning you make of them, how you connect them to what you know from prior HDFS studies and from what you yourself study to deepen your learning and understanding.

Similarly, your grade is not earned just because you read the text (or in this case, complete your hours) or report that you are learning a lot. Your grade in this course is based on the demonstration of your learning and the depth and quality of your critical reflection upon what you are learning in the field in relation to and from an HDFS perspective.

There are several means through which you will be expected to demonstrate what you are learning and how you are critically reflecting upon your direct experiences and the readings and other resources you select to study. These may include a regular service-learning journal, critical reflection papers, detailed incident reports, a major literature review and program evaluation paper, and a mid as well as final critical self-reflection assignments. Some of these would be across both semesters while others assigned for one or the other semester. Assignments will vary depending on the instructor and semester you are taking the course.

A summary of the general approach to grading in this course is:

- DIRECT INTERNSHIP WORK: You must engage in an approved internship and meet the responsibilities and hours you agreed to meet over the course of a full semester, to pass the class. Being in the field two times a week for at least 12 weeks of the semester (or the equivalent –e.g., 2x a week for 10 weeks combined with 1x a week for another 4 weeks).
- Provided you meet the above minimum expectations, your grade will be based upon the amount and quality of your academic work for this class, your responsible participation in all course elements, and most generally the evidence you provide to your academic instructor of appropriate and substantial integration of and critical reflection upon your direct work experiences, your HDFS academic studies/discipline, and HDFS professional practice, through the required written assignments, in class participation and through other means. Except perhaps for a small portion of your grade, your course grade is determined not by what you do in the field or how well you do it but by the academic work you submit that demonstrates your learning and your engagement in the course.

### Miscellaneous Information about HDF 4991 and Responses to Typical Questions

#### **Is the Internship Course Available to be Completed in One Semester? And Can I Start this Course in the Spring Semester?**

No. The HDFS Capstone Internship experience is a two-semester, sequenced course, with at least 3 credits taken in the fall followed by at least 3 credits taken in the spring. The course must be started in the fall.

#### **Is the Internship Course Available in the Summer?**

No. The HDFS Capstone Internship two-semester course cannot be taken during the summer.

#### **Can I Take the Internship Course for More Than 3 Credits Each Semester?**

Some students who have elective credits available may enroll in more than a total of six credits of

HDF 4991. This allows students to focus even more fully on this important capstone course, expanding time in the field and time for critical reflection upon field experiences and the HDFS profession and discipline. Required hours and academic work are adjusted accordingly. Note that any additional credit hours in the fall do not replace the need for the student to complete at least 3 credits in the spring.

### **How Many Other Courses Should I Take, Especially HDFS Seminar Courses?**

The 3 credit Internship course should be thought of as AT LEAST equivalent to the work of one upper-level seminar course in HDFS and as such, you may find it best to take only one official HDFS seminar course each semester you are doing the internship. That said, you may need and be able to manage two HDFS seminar courses along with your internship. Please note that no student may take all three required seminar classes in one semester (if and when we offer 3 different seminar classes in any one semester).

### **Can I get Paid for my Internship?**

As already mentioned, HDFS allows students to get paid for the hours you are working for your organization. We allow this because you are not earning credit for this work, but rather for your demonstration of learning through reflecting upon this work in relation to HDFS. That said, we will not approve a placement for an internship where you are also an employee if the commitment to you from the organization and supervisor is not primarily to your learning and development. This would be the case if we were concerned about the amount of leeway you would have over the two semesters in what you do. Leeway tends to be limited in cases where the needs of the organization or your employer are primary, and you have been hired to do specific work regardless of whether that work continues to offer you new and challenging learning and development opportunities.

### **What are Common Misunderstandings Students May Have and Traps Students May Fall into that Negatively Impact Academic Success?**

- 1. My Internship work is the most important part of this course; I am better off taking on more hours when asked than saying no and using those hours to engage in reading about, thinking about and critically reflecting upon issues I am learning about in the field.*
- 2. I will learn the most by doing during my Internship work; documenting this work in my journals and identifying and completing readings to inform my thinking is just not important.*
- 3. If my Internship Supervisor thinks highly of me, I should get an “A” in the course.*
- 4. It doesn’t matter whether I’m on top of the academic work as long as I am a responsible professional at my Internship site.*
- 5. It doesn’t matter what I do at my Internship, so long as I can log the hours.*