OBJECTIVES:

Psychology 492 is intended to augment the basic curriculum in psychology by enabling students to obtain academic credit for volunteer work in a human service or business setting. Through such work, students have the opportunity to observe and apply many of the psychological principles learned in the classroom while also developing a deeper understanding of those principles and a fuller appreciation of the special demands and ethical considerations of applied psychology. Additionally, students may develop specific applied skills through their fieldwork activities. For many students, this experience can also be helpful in clarifying career interests and goals.

COURSE FORMAT:

This course is flexibly structured to accommodate the diverse needs and goals of both students and placement agencies. The credit hours for Psychology 492 are also variable for the same reasons, but students are generally expected to perform 45 hours of service, including orientation and training time, for each Psychology 492 semester credit for which they have registered. During an academic semester (15 weeks) this would entail approximately 3 hours of service per week at a given site for each credit.

Students will function on site in much the same manner as employees or other volunteers, and the agency or business should expect students to be equally reliable and responsible. Each student should be assigned a field supervisor at the placement site, and this supervisor will assist the student in developing appropriate goals for the experience, oversee the student's day-to-day activities, and provide the faculty supervisor with a written evaluation at the end of the semester. The faculty supervisor will screen students to ensure that they meet course prerequisites, be available to both students and agencies to help address any problems that emerge on site, and assign S-F grades at the end of the semester.

Students, in consultation with the faculty supervisor, are responsible evolving learning goals specific to their educational programs (see attached goal sheet), and they will find and arrange their own placements. The advising offices, as well as faculty supervisor, have descriptions of local human service agencies that have provided practicum experiences and contact persons in those agencies. Many agencies have training at the beginning of each semester, so plan accordingly.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLACEMENT FACILITY

The fieldwork practicum is designed with the intent of significantly contributing to the activities of a placement facility, agency, or business setting, while creating a minimum of staff administrative work. Nonetheless, there are some demands and responsibilities for placement setting staff, as summarized below:

1. Students should receive an orientation to the placement facility at the beginning of their experience to become familiar with the mission, personnel, and physical layout of the agency.

2. Each student should be assigned a field supervisor, who is a permanent staff member.
3. The field supervisor should be available to meet with the student on a regular basis to develop placement goals and learning activities, monitor student progress, answer questions, and help resolve any problems that might occur.

4. The field supervisor should notify the faculty supervisor of any problems that are not resolved directly with the student.

5. The field supervisor MUST provide a written evaluation of the student's performance to the faculty supervisor by the Monday of final exam week during the fall and spring semesters, or by July 30 for summer placements. This evaluation should confirm the number of hours that the student worked and address the quality of the student's work. The evaluation letter may be submitted to the faculty supervisor in hard copy or electronically.

STUDENT'S REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Before registering for Psychology 492, students will meet with the faculty supervisor, as well as with the potential site supervisor, to develop learning goals and experiences specific to their educational goals and the opportunities available at a given site. In conjunction with the faculty supervisor, the student will complete the Goals Statement Form associated with this syllabus and a Psychology 490/491/492 Agreement and Grade Report Form available on the department Web site. Students will also arrange for an interview by a site administrator or volunteer coordinator and that selection interview, based on the judgment of the site coordinator in conjunction with the meeting with the faculty supervisor, will determine whether a 492 placement at a specific site can occur.

Be advised that, as a prerequisite for placement consideration, many settings may ask students to sign a permission to conduct State of Iowa or other state’s background checks using any or all of the following sources: Child Abuse Register, Sex Offender Register, Department of Transportation (Driving) Records, or criminal (DCI) records. Also note that any messages or pictures that you post on public domain Web sites, such as your Facebook or your MySpace pages may be accessed by setting administrators or agency volunteer coordinators, and they may be used to evaluate your candidacy or suitability for a practicum placement.

2. Students will behave professionally, and conduct their activities consistent with the ethical principles of psychology and the policies and expectations of the practicum setting.

3. Students will honor all commitments to the placement setting, including, but not limited to:
   a. punctual and regular attendance.
   b. fulfillment of the contracted time commitment.
   c. behavior consistent with setting regulations and policies and the placement supervisor’s instructions.
   d. performance of all agreed upon duties.

4. Students will be removed from the placement and will receive a failing grade in the course for any of the following:
   a. repeated tardiness or absences.
   b. ethical violations that are observed by agency staff or those that have been substantiated by agency review.
   c. irreconcilable problems with agency staff that reflect inflexibility on the part of the student.
   d. repeated failure to keep commitments or satisfactorily perform agreed upon duties.

5. Students are encouraged to keep a journal of their experiences which will include their activities, observations, insights, and personal reactions. Journal entries should be written in a manner to preserve the anonymity of clients.
6. Students MUST keep a record of the time spent in Psych 492 activities on a time sheet (form is attached to this syllabus). The time sheet must be turned in to the faculty supervisor by the Monday of final exam week during the fall and spring semesters, or by July 30 for summer placements.

7. Students enrolled for 2 or more credits MUST write a summary paper of approximately 10 pages describing their experience (see the section below-guidelines for preparation of papers). Papers are due the Monday of final exam week during fall or spring semesters, or by July 30 for summer placements.

The paper, the time sheet, and the letter-evaluation from the field supervisor are due the Monday of final exam week during fall and spring semesters. The summer due date for all materials and letter is July 30. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the field supervisor about the due date.

GRADING AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:

Psych 492 is graded S-F only. Students meeting their commitments to the placement agency, as confirmed by an evaluation letter from the field supervisor, and those completing all assignments, as outlined above, will receive a satisfactory grade (S); others will receive a failing grade (F).

ADDITIONAL GRADING AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES: Psychology 492 credit may not be used to fulfill internship, practicum, or field placement requirements for a major or minor in another department. The same site placement, learning tasks, and practicum hours for which the Psych 492 student has contracted, may not be used to gain concurrent credit in another department.

PSYCHOLOGY 492 - GUIDELINES FOR SUMMARY PAPERS
A. Description of the Placement Site
   1. Purpose and objectives of the organization
   2. Physical setting
   3. Staff composition (disciplines & degrees represented)
   4. Clientele (persons served by the agency)
   5. Funding sources
B. Your Duties
   1. Work schedule and total hours worked
   2. Range of activities (e.g., service provision, observation, staff meetings, etc.)
C. Supervision (frequency, quality, etc.)
   1. Formal supervision
   2. Informal supervision
D. Experiential Learning
   1. Client behavior, needs, etc.
   2. Agency functioning, needs, etc.
   3. Psychological principles that were observed or could have been applied
   4. Ethical issues/dilemmas observed or encountered
E. Critique
   1. Overall evaluation of the experience and placement agency
   2. Relevance to your past coursework
   3. Impact on your future
   4. Potential value to other students
   5. Recommendations for improvement

This is an important course paper, a document that describes your experiences, as well as your reactions to them. In addition, it should reflect what you learned. It must be word processed, double-spaced, and presented in 10-12 point font (12 point is preferred) with one inch margins. References and citations, if included, should follow APA format.
PSYCHOLOGY 492 - FIELDWORK PRACTICUM

GOALS STATEMENT

Name: ___________________________________________ Semester/Year: __________________________

Placement Agency: ___________________________________________ Credits: _______________________

Supervisor: ___________________________________________

Goals for Professional and Personal Development

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________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________________________
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Duties and Responsibilities

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Observational Opportunities

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Placement Agency: __________________ Credits: ________

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Student Signature __________________ Date ________ Supervisor Signature __________________ Date ________