

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRACTICUM SYLLABUS: CJ409

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# Western Oregon University Practicum Program: General Practicum<sup>1</sup> Information

## Overview

The Criminal Justice practicum at WOU typically involves completing **a) 264<sup>2</sup>** hours—33 hours per every credit hour—of professional experience with a public or nonprofit CJ or social service agency (to be chosen by you in consultation with the WOU CJ practicum coordinator) and **b)** various written requirements (see below). Practicum hours are typically completed over 10 weeks or less. Alternative schedules can also be arranged—as agreed upon by you, your host agency (field) supervisor, and your faculty supervisor. You are responsible for arranging your schedule and activities with your host agency and notifying your faculty supervisor of your plans.

Practicum experiences are completed during the junior or senior year of study. Planning should begin approximately 3 terms in advance of your desired start date. Begin by identifying your goals and preferences and exploring your options. Discussions with your academic advisor and online research can be a very effective way to identify suitable prospective host agencies and to learn about eligibility requirements and application procedures. Once you have discussed your interests and goals with your academic advisor and have an idea of what kinds of agencies interest you, meet with the WOU CJ Practicum coordinator for further assistance and to discuss your plans.

After meeting with the faculty coordinator to get input and advice, you will be responsible for contacting agency representatives, submitting application materials and getting accepted. Once you have secured a placement, you will sign up for the course officially. Please note that once you are accepted by an agency, the agency may require you to agree to a criminal history check, a review of your social media accounts and/or a background investigation (depending on the agency). Also note that during your practicum you will be expected to comply with the rules, regulations and policies applicable to your host agency.

# Western Oregon University Practicum Program: Practicum CJ409 Syllabus

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms ‘practicum’ and ‘internship’ interchangeably. The primary distinction between the two is simply the level of involvement in actual ‘hand-on’ work. Where an internship involves a large amount of work that closely resembles typical work by professionals, a practicum involves more observation and documentation of these activities. Your experience may be closer to either one of these terms.

<sup>2</sup> Depending on the calendar year when you began at WOU, your hour requirements may be different. Contact the practicum coordinator if you started during the 2018-2019 calendar year.

### Course Goals (from WOU Catalog)

1. Students will be able to describe the role of the practicum agency (CJ Program Learning Outcome 1; Explain and analyze the role of each component of the criminal justice field and how they relate to each other) and (ULO: Integrative Learning)
2. Students will understand professional and ethical practices of criminal justice practitioners (Course Specific) and (ULO: Not applicable)
3. Students will understand the relationship between the practicum agency and other criminal justice agencies. (CJ Program Learning Outcome 1; Explain and analyze the role of each component of the criminal justice field and how they relate to each other) and (ULO: Integrative Learning)

### Course Requirements for CJ 409 Practicum

As a practicum student in CJ409, you are required to complete/submit **a)** a list of things you would like to learn or accomplish while in practicum **b)** a practicum schedule **c)** complete a student practicum evaluation, and **d)** email your faculty practicum supervisor to check in every 2 weeks. **Moreover**, your practicum faculty supervisor at WOU will communicate with your agency supervisor about halfway through your experience to check on your progress. This check-up will likely be in the form of an email or phone conversation, but could also take place in person depending on the circumstances.

Details about each of the above assignments are provided below. **\*\*These requirements are not suggestions**, as with any other course, you will not receive a passing grade (even if you complete the hour requirement) unless they have been completed these assignments are required by the course.

*\*Although not required of CJ 409, it is recommended that students keep a journal of their activities during practicum and request a recommendation letter from their agency supervisors towards the end of their practicum experience.*

**A)** This is a list of things you plan to *do, learn, or accomplish* during your practicum. A list of 6-8 one-sentence items is preferred (e.g., I want to become familiar with the intake process in jail). It is **required** that you include your agency supervisor when creating your list of goals. After all, they can provide feedback on whether or not those are attainable, whether you should include broader or narrower goals, etc. The purpose of these are to guide your experience at the agency. Please work on these goals with your agency supervisor before or immediately at the start of practicum, then submit them to your faculty supervisor Omar Melchor Ayala *as soon as possible*. An example will be emailed.

**B)** The practicum schedule provides an estimate of your a) start date, b) the approximate number of hours you expect to complete each week and/or your tentative weekly schedule, and c) your anticipated completion date. \*Your faculty supervisor will work with you and check on your progress throughout the term. An example of a practicum schedule will be emailed.

**C)** You will complete an internship evaluation form. More details will be sent out later in the term.

**D)** It is required that you email your faculty supervisor (me) approximately every 2 weeks to check in. The purpose of these emails is simply to check in and update your faculty supervisor on your progress, any issues or concerns that may arise, any questions related to your practicum experience, etc. At the very least, the email should contain the number of hours you have completed to date, and anything else you wish to share or inquire about regarding your practicum experience. The email will be sent back unless it contains this basic information. There is no length requirement for this assignment.

### **Role/expectations of Host Agency Supervisors**

Your host agency supervisor is expected to work with you in creating the list of things you wish to accomplish, your schedule, and guiding your overall practicum experience at the agency. Your host agency supervisor will also complete an evaluation of your performance and accomplishments during your practicum. More information, and the actual evaluation form will be sent later in the term

### **Un-enrolling from Practicum**

If you enroll in CJ409 but ultimately change your plans, or fail to secure a placement agreement with a host agency, it is your responsibility to drop (or un-enroll) CJ 409 by the applicable course-drop deadline (please refer to the WOU Registrar's Office website for details). \*\*\*The primary point to remember is to communicate with your faculty supervisor. We may be able to work with you in case that you are not able to finish practicum by the time you initially planned (e.g. incomplete grade). Also, remember that if you are taking CJ 407 and 409 together, these are separate courses. You could un-enroll from 409 if you could not secure a placement but continue to take 407 for instance.

### **Conclusion**

Please keep in mind that if the need arises your faculty supervisor is available to serve as your advocate. One of our goals is for you to have the best possible practicum experience. Of course, you are your own best advocate, so be sure to approach your field/agency supervisor with requests for specific opportunities or assignments that correspond with your goals. If, at any time, you feel that you are insufficiently challenged (or if you have any other concerns), do not hesitate to contact your faculty supervisor. We will be happy to serve as a "consultant" for purposes of coming up with strategies for you to get the most out of your experience. If necessary, we will also speak with your field supervisor for purposes of promoting your interests and objectives.

Email your faculty supervisor at any time with your questions or concerns. Our major goal is for you to have a very rich, challenging, and enjoyable practicum experience.