

Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture
Themes in Cultures and Communities: Chicago Style
2008 Summer Session Syllabus
June 9 – August 1, 2008

Staff:

Seminar Instructor: Leesa Albert, M.A.
Class Assistant: Lane Chesebro

Required Readings:

Gang Leader for a Day. Sudhir Venkatesh. The Penguin Press, 2008.
Enrique's Journey.

Chicago Tribune, Monday through Friday
Short articles as assigned

Objectives:

The Summer Session is designed to give the student broad exposure to Chicago's institutions, cultures, and communities, while creating an individual experience living in the city and an academic internship related to the student's major and interest. A synergy is developed between the internship and the seminar which examines compelling issues the city brings to the table.

A major portion of the summer will be spent in a four-day-a-week internship. Students will test career interests, gain a working knowledge of a particular organization, and develop practical skills. Through the internship, the student will realize a direct, hands-on engagement with the city and its residents. The placement links the students to the everyday work world of Chicago.

Chicago's multiple diversities (ethnic, racial, religious, economic class, sexual orientation and gender) will be emphasized throughout the eight weeks of the summer term. An appreciation of diversity as a basis for community will be gained through scheduled exposure to a wide range of cultural events, urban neighborhoods, and institutions. Racism and economic inequality will be examined through readings and direct dialogue with community activists and Chicago residents who confront these issues on local, domestic, and international levels. The arts, which often voice communal aspirations, will provide a window into the hopes and dreams of cultures and identities, which are too often marginalized by commercial cultural attractions.

Living in urban community can be the most enlightening and enjoyable part of the summer. Over the eight weeks the city will transform from an unfamiliar (and even uncomfortable) anonymous place to a welcoming, known and intimate environment. The student will acquire an appreciation of the diversity of the city well beyond the fears, misconceptions and stereotypes that continue to predominate in much of the media and the popular mind-set. The student will develop a functional literacy of urban life and culture beyond that which they brought with them.

Design:

The Chicago Center Summer Session includes cooperative living, the seminar (including orientation) schedule and assignments, the internship placement, a comprehensive journal (including written responses), individually selected events, and a group project.

Cooperative Living

With the help of House Coordinators, students develop a living environment that meets the basic needs of the group and the expectations of Chicago Center. Cooperative living includes managing the food budget, preparing menus and meals, and general house maintenance.

Orientation and Internship Selection

The first two weeks of the term are spent in orientation and the internship interview and selection process. The orientation schedule includes allotted times for calling and interviewing potential placement sites. The instructor will suggest sites to call based upon the students application interest and credit requirements. The student will make their selection after interviewing a minimum of two sites. The selection process is considered an integral part of the internship and usually takes a week to ten days to complete.

Internship Placement

Once the internship site is selected, the student spends four days each week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) in the internship. Unless otherwise arranged, the internship is from 9 AM to 5 PM each day. Your supervisor will direct your activities in the internship. **Internship activities must be kept outside scheduled Seminar days unless prior arrangement with your instructor is made.**

Seminar Schedule and Assignments

Each Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) is reserved for the seminar. Each seminar day includes scheduled activities that focus on Chicago's communities and the issues faced by urban neighborhoods struggling to maintain or redevelop themselves as healthy, vibrant, and stable places. We will consider the role of the arts and cultural institutions in this process. A second part of the seminar focuses on readings, written responses and discussion. Class discussion will reflect on connections among scheduled activities/inputs and with assigned readings. Weekly seminar schedules will be distributed to students prior to each class. **Note:** While most class events will be scheduled in the above time frame, there will be required events at other times, potentially including events on a weekend; sufficient notice will be given.

Requirements:

Scheduled Events

All scheduled events are required from the first day of orientation. Scheduled events during orientation are part of the Seminar. Your instructor will distribute additional weekly Seminar schedules after orientation is over. **Seminar events cannot be made up and points will be deducted for missed events.**

Internship Placement

Students are required to spend 32 hours each week in the internship, *regardless of credit requirements*. Each student will complete an internship agreement to be signed by the supervisor and the instructor as well as the student. The Chicago Center Instructor will make one site visit as part of the internship evaluation. The student is a participant in the site evaluation along with the site supervisor. The placement supervisor will fill out an evaluation of the intern at the end of the eight weeks.

Journal

Beginning with arrival, the student will keep an integrated daily journal. For the Seminar, the journal should include description, observation, and interpretation of seminar activities, readings and discussions. The journal is also a record of the internship, and daily experience in Chicago. Personal reactions are inevitable; however, the journal is intended to move beyond reaction to reflection and response. ("Like," "don't like," and "interesting," are not very helpful). The journal is the primary learning tool in the term and becomes a

dialogue with the instructor and the experience. The journal is intended as a cognitive tool for linking experiences and making connections among the various aspects of the term. Journal reflections should demonstrate learning progress. New experiences will add understanding to initial perceptions and reactions. Journals will be turned in as scheduled during the term for your section. They will be returned to the student with written responses from the instructor.

Written Responses to Required Texts

Written responses will be required as indicated by each instructor and can be incorporated into the journal.

Individually Selected Events (Contracted Options)

Throughout the summer, many opportunities exist for exploring the city independently which cannot be included in the schedule. To encourage a relationship to the city that expresses your own interests, each student will select four events or places beyond the required activities. You will describe, interpret, and react to each of your "contracted options" in a written report. Detailed description to follow separately.

Group Project

The seminar group project will be described in a handout distributed by your instructor.

Grading:

A. Separate grades for the seminar and internship

• Internship

Internship supervisor evaluation 70%

Placement journal entries 15%

Placement visit evaluation 15%

• Seminar

Journal 40%

Participation 30% (Active engagement in discussion as well as attendance at all required events.)

Contracted options 10%

Required Written Responses 10%

Group project 10%

B. Unified grade for the seminar and internship

Internship supervisor evaluation 50%

Placement visit evaluation 10%

Journal 20% (Includes internship and text entries.)

Participation 10% (Active engagement in discussion as well as attendance at all required events).

Contracted Options 5%

Group Project 5%

All grades are based on the following scale:

90 – 100% A

80 – 89% B

70 – 79% C

60 – 69% D

59% and below F

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90 – 100% A

80 – 89% B

70 – 79% C

60 – 69% D

59% and below F