

# Experiential Learning Practicum Syllabus Template

## BASIC INFORMATION

- Practicum title, associated base course(s) title(s), catalogue number
- Date (term and year)
- Class meeting times and location
- Designate type of practicum (research, lab work, community-engaged learning, theater, art, or project-based work)
- Time commitment for the practicum course
- Practicum instructor information (name, office hours & location, contact information)
- Office of Experiential Learning and Teaching contact information
  - Mandel Center for the Humanities
  - <http://www.brandeis.edu/experientiallearning>
- Contact information for TA or PA
- For Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) practicum courses*, include the name of the community partner and any relevant contacts.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Description of the course: engaging and clear articulation of how the practicum will enhance classroom learning and provide opportunities to gain practical experience.
- Provide a definition of experiential learning (EL) that articulates its benefits. This definition can help students understand experiential learning and how it will influence their learning process. Feel free to use the example below, or to adapt it for your purposes.
  - *Experiential Learning is a teaching methodology that engages learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities. It helps learners make connections between their past and current experiences. A facilitated reflection process encourages students to make relevant connections to their own academic, professional and personal motivations and goals. After making these connections, learners will be able to carry their learning process into future experiences and contexts.*
- Emphasize the role of reflection: describe what reflection is, how it is implemented in the course and why it is a crucial component of experiential learning. Feel free to use the example below, or adapt it for your purposes.
  - *In reflective activities, students express how they are processing an experience and what learning they are drawing from that experience. Students are prompted through written or oral activities to analyze and think critically about their*

*experience. Reflection helps students connect their past and present experiences and understand their own motivations. They often develop their own narratives about their learning processes, both within the course and beyond. It is this intentional process of reflection that generates the learning from experience and leads to the achievement of particular learning objectives. Reflective activities also provide a formative assessment structure in which instructors can collect data, interpret the results, adjust teaching strategies as needed and collect more data.*

## COURSE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

- Describe the goals of the practicum and connect them to the goals of the base course(s).
  - *Goals* are the intended learning outcomes of a course. They are more global and general, and are often linked to more than one learning objective.
    - *Example: The course goal of “Understanding the funding and volunteer structures of nonprofit social service organizations” is linked to these three objectives: “Articulate theories of nonprofit management”*  
*“Research and identify grant opportunities for your organization”*  
*“Create a logic model that represents your organization’s mission and goals”*
- State learning objectives for the practicum.
  - *Objectives* are brief, specific statements that describe the outcomes (specific skills, values, and attitudes) that you expect students to achieve in the course.
    - *Cognitive Objectives: What students should know*
    - *Affective Objectives: What students should care about, or how their perspectives will be transformed*
    - *Behavioral Objectives: What students should be able to do*
  - Learning objectives are met in whole or in part by student participation in experiential learning activities.
    - *Example: “Through their volunteer work, students will develop a more nuanced understanding of the challenges facing nonprofit organizations.”*

## PRACTICUM PROJECT(S) OR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING SITES

- Describe project option(s)
  - Explain the link between the project work and the learning objectives for the practicum.
- Describe the roles, responsibilities and commitment required of students for the practicum project.
- *For CEL practicum courses, include a list of partners and a description of the activities.*

- For practicum projects working with multiple community partners, it is helpful to provide brief summaries of each agency (including mission, project, volunteer schedule, population served, location, etc.). This allows students to make informed decisions on where to get involved for the semester, based on their interests and availability.
- Include relevant community or project contact information.
- Outline any volunteer requirements (some organizations may require volunteer applications, background screenings, minimum time commitments, etc.)

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Textbooks and readings
  - The practicum must include relevant readings to supplement the project work and class sessions.
  - Consider including a reading about experiential learning and or service learning (see EL website for resources).
- List of additional resources that may help students be successful throughout their practicum, such as links to valuable websites, videos, etc.
- Other required purchases (lab supplies, calculator, art supplies, etc.)

### ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

- Brief description of each requirement (e.g. quizzes, exams, written reflections, projects, presentations)
- Grade breakdown for final grade (20% participation in class discussions, 30% written reflections, 20% oral presentation, etc.)
- Inform students that practicum courses can be taken as graded or as pass/fail.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CLASS POLICIES

- Include attendance & tardiness policy for the course
- Outline procedures for documenting practicum project hours outside of class (ex. volunteer hours with local agency for CEL, lab time, studio time, etc.)
- Set policy regarding acceptable behavior. For CEL, outline expected behavior at community agencies (communication with supervisor, adherence to schedule, professionalism, etc.)
- Define expectations for reflection, both written and oral. Encourage students to move beyond surface-level, descriptive reflection into critical, analytical reflection.
- Set the expectations and norms for productive and respectful class discussion.

## TRANSPORTATION

- ❑ Brandeis policy regarding academic integrity: See Section 4 of the [Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#). Do not assume that students understand how academic honesty policies apply to experiential learning.
- ❑ For CEL or off-campus practicum projects, be sure to state the policy on transportation. If there are funds available to offset transportation costs, inform students here. If not, make it clear that financial assistance is not available.
- ❑ Transportation to practicum sites should be explained as one of the required costs of the course and can be likened to purchasing textbooks.
- ❑ Provide a link to the [Experiential Learning website](#) for additional transportation resources.

## STATEMENT OF RISK MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Inform students about any potential risks involved in the designated experiential learning activities for the practicum.
- ❑ There are no required waivers or liability forms for experiential learning at Brandeis.

## CALENDAR

- ❑ Calendar of class dates, topics, readings, assignment due dates, exam dates.

## OPTIONAL SYLLABUS ELEMENTS

- ❑ In addition to our syllabus recommendations, you may want to create a contract formalizing the partnership among students, faculty and community organizations for the course. See the *Tips for EL 94a Practicum* document for further details.