



Institute for Religion, Peace and Justice (St. Stephen's University)

Practicum Overview

International Studies 5090

Field Experience

3 Credit Hours

St. Stephen's University

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Andrew Klager (andrewklager@ssu.ca)

Preamble:

This practicum course gives IRPJ students an opportunity to participate in efforts directed at addressing issues related to peace and justice from a variety of angles. Students will identify and coordinate work, co-op, internship, or volunteer opportunities with organizations that are working to address peace and justice issues that may be local and/or global in scope. Students will also read about the situation they are engaging themselves in, record reflections during their experience, and submit a final report on key areas of the experience. The practicum experience should normally be approximately 80 hours in length to receive 3 credits, with the amount of supplementary coursework adjusted commensurate with the number of hours below or above 80 hours.

Objectives:

- to give students experience in their field of interest during their studies to aid in contextualizing what they are learning in the classroom setting;
- to give students contacts and work experience to aid them in connecting with work or volunteer opportunities after completing their program;
- to provide a structure for personalized reflection that captures what the student is learning in intentional human encounters.

Supervision:

The on-site supervisor is responsible for keeping track of the student's hours and filling out a short one-page questionnaire at the end of the student's practicum.

Requirements:



NB: all requirements assume 80 hours of practicum experience; the professor and student will agree to adjustments to the workload amount depending on how much the length of the practicum deviates from this 80-hour standard.

- Proposal — 750 words
- Readings (as agreed to by the professor and student)
- Journal Reflections
- Final Report

Proposal (*due one month prior to the beginning of the practicum*):

Students will create and submit a brief proposal (approximately 750 words) that outlines what they intend to do for their practicum, including where they plan to complete their practicum and what specific responsibilities they will be carrying out. The following three sections should comprise the proposal:

- location and brief description of the practicum placement site;
- proposed on-site supervisor at the practicum location, including a brief description of his/her background, education, and years of experience in the field of the practicum placement;
- brief description of the types of responsibilities anticipated and its relationship to personal goals and hopes related to involvement in peace and justice initiatives.

Once a proposal is approved, the student is eligible to receive academic credit for the opportunity upon the completion of all requirements and payment of tuition.

Readings:

The professor and student will decide upon two books that the student will read as part of the practicum placement. The primary purpose of these readings is to provide material to integrate, compare, evaluate, and analyze in relation to the student's practicum experience and for reflection in journal entries and the final report that the student will write.

Journal Reflections:

The student will write ~~three~~ 3–4-page journal reflections (double spaced) spread out over the length of the practicum placement. Whether the practicum is one week or one month, students must find time to complete these journal reflections in the midst of their practicum experience to capture their thoughts, feelings, emotions, psychological state, insights, experiences, struggles, etc. as they develop and change during their practicum. Regardless of the timeframe, it is important to spread these journal reflections out relatively evenly across the length of the practicum. The parameters of these journal reflections are open-ended but should be dated and reflect upon the elements listed above among others.



Final Report (*due one month after the completion of the practicum*):

Students are responsible for writing an approximately 8-page final report on their practicum experience. This report should include the following elements:

- A description of the purpose and type of peace and justice work (broadly defined) of the practicum placement organization (0.5 pages);
- The responsibilities of the student during the practicum (0.5 pages);
- An evaluation of how the work of the organization and responsibilities of the student during the practicum contribute practically to peace and justice (broadly defined) (1.5–2 pages);
- An description of which contemplative and ascetic disciplines could have been (or were) incorporated into the experience of those who participate in the initiatives and programs of the practicum organization (including the student during the practicum experience), and an explanation of how these disciplines could have been beneficial (1.5–2 pages);
- A theological assessment of the type of work of the practicum organization and student's responsibilities and how they relate to or express a gospel of peace (1.5–2 pages);
- A description of how the practicum experience has prepared the student for continued work in peace and justice (1.5–2 pages).

Final Assessment:

After all practicum requirements as outlined above have been fulfilled, a final assessment will be provided. Practicums are not graded; credit is either granted or not granted. In situations where credit is withheld, the reason will be because of failure to fulfill the requirements of the practicum and/or significant concerns regarding the readiness for more independent involvement in peace and justice initiatives as determined by the supervising faculty member and the on-site supervisor. If this is the case, a concerted effort will be made to help the student understand the seriousness of concerns during the course of the practicum and afterward.