The University of Southern Mississippi  
School of Library and Information Science  

LIS 689: Library Practicum  

Professor  
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Office hours: Monday-Thursday 1:30-4:30pm or by appointment  

Course Prerequisites:  
LIS 501: Introduction to Reference Resources and Services  
LIS 505: Cataloging and Classification  
LIS 511: Collection Development and Management  
LIS 605: Library Management  
LIS 636: Information: Libraries in American Society  

Requirements for On-Site Practicum Supervisors  
Library or information professionals who will be supervising LIS practicum students must:  
1) Hold an accredited MLIS, an appropriate professional degree or extensive professional  
   expertise, or certification as a School Library Media Specialist.  
2) Possess at least three years experience in the area of the practicum, for example a student  
   performing in a cataloging focused practicum should be supervised by a professional with  
   at least three years experience cataloging.  
3) Be willing to commit time to the supervision and training of a practicum student, and  
   complete the requested application and evaluation forms.  

Course Description/Overview: The practicum experience involves education through  
participation in a professional work setting under the supervision of a practitioner and faculty  
member. This experience is a cooperative undertaking of the student, the practicum on-site  
supervisor, and the practicum (faculty) director. The needs and requirements of the library or  
information agency are to be considered as well as the educational needs of the student. For this  
cooperative effort to work, the student must consult with the proposed practicum site supervisor  
before registering for the practicum and complete a practicum agreement form.  

Though a practicum is not required for the master’s degree, it is strongly recommended for those  
students possessing narrow or no library experience. It is also available to students wishing to  
broaden existing knowledge and gain practical experience. The practicum experience may  
involve one or more library or information systems for two, three, or four credit hours. A 2-credit  
hour practicum requires a work experience of 100 clock hours per semester. A 3-credit hour  
practicum requires a work experience of 150 clock hours per semester, and a 4-credit hour  
practicum requires work experience of 200 clock hours per semester. The hours per week and/or  
the number of weeks per semester/term may vary, depending upon the design of the individual's
experience program. Every practicum student will provide the appropriate clock hours to the
practicum site.

Every practicum student will have a faculty director and will maintain a time log and a practicum
reflective journal.

**Catalog Description:** 2-4 graduate credit hours of supervised practical experience under the
guidance of professional librarian.

**Course Scheduled/Offered:** Every semester.

**Purpose:**
The purpose of the practicum experience is to provide the student with experience under the
supervision of an information professional in a library or information-related environment with
the added guidance of a library faculty member. The practicum should also provide benefit to the
practicum provider. The experience is tailored to the needs and career objectives of the
individual student as well as the interests of the practicum provider. The experience permits
opportunity for the evaluation of both theory and practice. General goals of the practicum
experience include providing a practical learning experience, practice with document writing,
journaling and communication.

**Teaching Techniques/Methods Used in Course:**
Supervised, hands-on work experience in a library; informal, reflective journal, PowerPoint
presentation.

**Requirements:**
1). **Reflective Journal (30 points)**
Each practicum student is required as part of the credit for the practicum to maintain a time log
and report a **weekly reflective journal (or post weekly to a practicum blog)**. Both the log and
journal are to be written in informal, Standard English, in complete coherent sentences using
proper grammar and spelling. Students may use personal pronouns and contractions in informal,
reflective writing. Failure to maintain and submit these logs will result in the student receiving a
failing grade in the practicum regardless of any other evaluations.

The **time log** will include the number of hours worked each day. The **journal** summarizes the
week and should report the tasks, learning experiences, activities and opportunities. The **journal**
should include the reflections of the student upon the various experiences, detailing the
relationship between what the student has learned in the classroom and what occurs during the
practicum. The student should identify what has been learned that was not previously known or
understood, how this information will be useful in the field and how it was applied in the
practicum situation. The logs and journals will be transmitted **weekly** to the faculty practicum
director as an email attachment in software the faculty practicum director specifies (Microsoft
Word or equivalent; double-spaced); the reflective journal may be posted in an online blog
(request permission and instructions from drtwelsh@yahoo.com). More detailed instructions and
grading rubric are available in a separate document.
2. **PowerPoint Presentation (20 points)**  
Students are required to create and submit a PowerPoint presentation of their practicum activities and experiences.

3. **Evaluation, Grade Recommendation by the On-Site Practicum Supervisor (50 points)**  
The on-site practicum supervisor’s midterm assessment form, final assessment form, and final evaluation/grade recommendation form are available as a separate document.

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**General Rules and Guidelines for Practicum Students**

**A: Basic Professionalism**
- Be at work on time!
- When on duty you are expected to work.
- Do your part in keeping the practicum site clean, attractive, and orderly.
- Be accurate in your work!
- Since you represent The University and the School of Library and Information Science you are to dress professionally and be clean and neat in appearance.
- On the job study is not permitted.
- Termination of the practicum will result from:
  a) Theft or dishonesty
  b) Insubordination
  c) Destruction of property
  d) Falsification of records
  e) Acts of moral turpitude
  f) Reporting to work under the influence of intoxicants
  g) Bringing onto or using illicit drugs on practicum premises
  h) Excessive tardiness or absences
  i) Conduct that imperils or threatens another.
The practicum student is studying to become a professional and should conduct him or herself as if the practicum is a job. The student will follow the rules and regulations of the practicum site. Request the permission and direction of the practicum site supervisor. DO NOT ASSUME you know the rules or how the facility works.

B. Work Performance
Practicum sites have the authority to choose the best-qualified individual for a practicum. They also have the right to reassign any student who does not perform their work to their satisfaction. Since this is the first work experience for many students, it is recommended that the practicum on-site supervisor discuss poor work performance with their practicum students. Practicum site supervisors are encouraged to nurture and build a strong work ethic in these individuals.

Any problems that cannot be resolved within the practicum site should be brought to the attention of the practicum faculty director. Practicum sites are not obligated to retain a substandard student worker.

C. Benefits
Typically practicum students are not eligible for employer-provided health insurance, state retirement, Social Security, accrued annual or major medical leave, or other hired employee benefits.

D. Additional Guidelines
- Arrange practicum with the practicum supervisor and the faculty director during or before the pre-registration period of the prior semester
- Complete all requirements established by the practicum site and School of Library and Information Science
- Provide practicum supervisor with the SLIS practicum assessment and evaluation forms
- Be punctual and reliable in regard to established work hours
- Perform all tasks carefully and thoroughly; follow directions provided
- Apply knowledge of principles and theories acquired as a result of prior coursework
- Communicate outcomes of practicum work to the practicum supervisor.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is serious. You must give credit for five or more words in a sequence by using quotation marks and indicating the source of the quote, and you must indicate the source of other factual information and ideas. Copying another student’s work in part or whole is also plagiarism. Plagiarism in an assignment will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

The following is from the USM Graduate Bulletin:
Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written or oral presentation in which the writer or speaker does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism.

Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts and facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another's facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of other scholars as if it were their own work.

Plagiarism is committed in a number of ways: 1) reproducing another author's writing as if it were one's own; 2) paraphrasing another author's work without citing the original; 3)
borrowing from another author's ideas, even though those ideas are reworded, without giving credit; [and] 4) copying another author's organization without giving credit.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. An act of plagiarism may lead to a failing grade on the paper and in the course, as well as sanctions that may be imposed by the student judicial system.

**Academic Honesty** (from USM Graduate Bulletin):

When cheating is discovered, the faculty member may give the student an F on the work involved or in the course. If further disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, the student should be reported to the Dean of Students. In addition to being a violation of academic honesty, cheating violates the Code of Student Conduct and may be grounds for probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Students on disciplinary suspension may not enroll in any courses offered by the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Disabilities Statement:**
If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

**Address:** The University of Southern Mississippi, Office for Disability Accommodations, 118 College Drive, # 8586, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
**Voice Telephone:** (601) 266-5024, or (228) 214-3232; **Fax:** (601) 266-6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1-800-582-2233 (TTY) or email Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu.

Syllabus revised 3/01/11
APPENDIX A: STUDENT CHECKLIST

_____ Discuss practicum with USM SLIS faculty advisor
    _____ Complete all prerequisites

_____ Propose a specific practicum

_____ Contact the practicum site supervisor to arrange an appointment
    _____ Provide the supervisor with a complete resume
    _____ Provide a letter explaining interest and skills related to the practicum
    _____ Provide a listing of courses completed
    _____ Construct a preliminary work schedule, lists of tasks, learning goals, schedule and evaluation criteria with the practicum site supervisor (practicum agreement)

_____ Receive permission to register for practicum class

_____ Formalize practicum agreement with on-site supervisor

_____ Obtain signatures on formal practicum agreement and send to Dr. Welsh

_____ Provide practicum site supervisor with USM SLIS evaluation forms

_____ Send Time Log and Reflective Journal submission each week to Dr. Welsh

_____ Prepare PowerPoint presentation and send to Dr. Welsh.
APPENDIX B: APPLICATION FOR LIS 689 PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Type or word process this form

SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Name: __________________________________________________ Date:____________
Address:________________________________________________________________
Email address:___________________________________________________________
Business Phone: ________________________ Home Phone: ______________________
Student ID ________________________
Faculty Practicum Director: __ Dr. Teresa Welsh ____________________________
Faculty Advisor: _________________________________________________________

I have completed the prerequisites for the Practicum – attach a current copy of your SOAR transcript print out
I am applying for
2 credits (100 clock hours) 3 credits (150 clock hours) 4 credits (200 clock hours)
In which term do you expect to be registered for the practicum?
______ Fall ____ Spring _____ Summer.

In which type of library do you wish to have a practicum?
______ School ______  Academic _______ Public _____ Special ______ Media Center

Respond to the first two statements on a separate sheet of paper, word-process your responses. Handwritten applications are no longer accepted.

1. Describe any library experience you have had.

2. State your purposes, goals, and objectives in applying for the practicum.

3. List the course titles of the LIS courses you have completed, arranged by course number.

4. List the course titles of all the courses you plan to take during the practicum semester, arranged by course number.

Submit the application and all attachments to your faculty advisor. Attach a list of the practicum sites and supervisors you will be contacting if you receive permission.
APPENDIX C: CHECKLIST OF OPERATIONAL SKILLS

Each student must develop a detailed and specific plan for the practicum experience with the on-site practicum supervisor. The activities, tasks, learning goals, scheduling and evaluation criteria must be agreed upon in writing with the on-site practicum supervisor and reviewed and approved by the faculty member directing the practicum. The "checklist" is a guide only and is presented to assist in developing an individualized practicum experience plan. The following checklist is a sample of operational skills that may be used in determination of an appropriate experience. It is not a complete or restrictive list; it is only a sample. The on-site supervisor should also include the learning goals and evaluation criteria appropriate to the tasks and experiences anticipated for the individual student.

EXAMPLES:

CIRCULATION

1. Shelving and filing materials
2. Checking out and clearing circulation
3. Reading shelves or inventory
4. Non-print circulation
5. Statistical records and rationale
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________

INFORMATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE

1. Use of reference materials
2. Introduction to reference procedures
3. Answering reference questions in person and via phone
4. User orientations or training
5. Preparing bibliographies
6. Online searching
7. Processing interlibrary loans
8. Current awareness services
9. Abstracting and indexing
10. Bibliographic instruction
11. ____________________________

TECHNICAL SERVICES

1. Repairing materials
   a. Books and serials
   b. Audio-Visual
   c. Other
2. Verifying requested items
3. Filling requests
4. Cataloging and classification
5. Assigning subject headings
6. Working with OCLC online
7. Materials selection
8. Periodicals
   a. Ordering
   b. Check-in
   c. Claiming
   d. Preparation for binding
   e. Shelving
   f. Updating services
9. Inputting of records into an automated system
10. Proofreading and correcting automated records
11. _________________________________

MANAGEMENT

1. Review policies of the library, such as personnel or collection development policies
2. Scheduling and maintenance of equipment
3. Review space requirements
4. Review of policies and procedures
5. Review budget and budget cycle
6. Review of the community served by the library or information center
7. Assist in public relations and other programs
8. Attend various meeting with supervisors or boards
9. Review short and long range plans
10. Discussion of the planning process and budgetary cycle
11. _________________________________

Specific tasks and evaluation criteria identified by the practicum site supervisor are strongly recommended.

When a preliminary practicum plan has been agreed upon the student is responsible for submitting a copy of the agreement to the faculty practicum director. When the agreement is finalized, the site supervisor, student and faculty member will sign a formal agreement form.