Internships and work experience give students a leg up when seeking employment after graduation. Senior Sophie Fritz applied for and received an AHSS Summer Internship Grant last spring. The grant enabled her to work as an intern in the United States Attorney's Office - District of Colorado for academic credit last summer.

"As a socio-legal studies major and hopefully a future Juris Doctorate student, the opportunity to work in such an incredible office helped my love for the law flourish," said Fritz, who became interested in law during her sophomore year.

Fritz chose a socio-legal studies major to explore classes and information pertaining to law that are offered throughout different departments at DU. This enabled her to look at law from a variety of perspectives before making a decision to attend law school. Her internship helped to expand her legal knowledge as well as career possibilities.

"Being constantly exposed to legal material is a great opportunity in itself. This job had taught me things that I never would have learned until law school or until my first legal job after graduation," she said.

During her internship, Fritz assisted attorneys with their trial preparations and was able to watch the criminal cases in trial. But it was a one-day field trip to the Federal Correctional Complex in Florence, CO, that made a lasting impression. The complex consists of a medium level security, high level security and a Supermax (super-maximum security) facility.
“Our office is given the opportunity to visit and receive a tour every year. Many of the inmates are in these federal facilities as a result of trials prosecuted by our office. The high level security is not allowed tours or guests and supermax level is almost completely unseen by the public,” said Fritz.

“This experience was truly eye opening and I learned so much about the federal prison system. As our office is full of criminal prosecutors, I think it’s important for them to visit a prison to understand where they are sending those defendants who are convicted and what a sentence of two years, for example, really means for someone.”

“Sophie is a terrific student who is driven to apply her socio-legal studies major to the ‘real world,’” said Scott Phillips, associate professor in the department of sociology and criminology, and director of the social-legal studies program. “To do so, she completed an internship with the U.S. Attorney’s office. She is now certain that she wants to be a lawyer, and I’m certain she will be a great one.”

In addition to socio-legal studies, Fritz also is a sociology and a Spanish major.

“I chose to major in sociology because I’m interested in learning about how people and groups function in our society. I think sociology can be applicable in many real life situations and it has helped me view the world through a sociological lens,” Fritz said. She added that her Spanish courses, and a chance to study abroad in Viña del Mar, Chile, have helped to refine her skills developed since kindergarten and prepare her for bilingual opportunities.

Although she doesn’t know yet what type of law she wants to practice, Fritz is excited and confident about the opportunities that lie ahead in law school.

“By having the opportunity to do an internship as one of my electives, I’ve become a more well-rounded student and will have an advantage when applying to law school as a student with experience in the legal field,” she said.