

# Student Internship in American Politics

Political Science 4191 Course #25591

Spring 2014

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“Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I will remember. Involve me and I will understand.”

-- Benjamin Franklin

## PURPOSE

Internships can serve a variety of purposes. They might serve as stepping stones to a vocation, a chance to “try out” employment in a particular field, as well as an opportunity to gain the kind of experience that can help lead to a career. This course is designed to give students an opportunity to gain practical experience by working for a public official, governmental agency, candidate, political party or interest group while at the same time permitting them to apply concepts learned in the classroom to an organizational environment and gain some professional work experience.

The following is a list of some objectives which the internship might fulfill for you and the organization (agency, candidate, interest group, etc.) with which you work:

1. provide students the opportunity to relate theory to practice
2. give students in-service orientation to a career area they may wish to pursue
3. allow students the opportunity to work in their area of intended specialization
4. enhance student's understanding of organizational and group processes
5. enhance student's awareness of public service obligations
6. develop an ongoing relationship between the academic and practitioner community
7. provide “apprentice” expertise and a new perspective for organizational operations

Although the foundation of this course is a work experience, it is still a course for which you will receive academic credit. It is also a course designed to help you learn from your experiences. Therefore, the requirements for this course and the evaluation of your performance in it are based upon a combination of work experience and more traditional academic activities.

## REQUIREMENTS:

### Work Requirement:

The first requirement is that you must work on meaningful tasks for a public official, public agency, candidate, political party, interest group, law office, or criminal justice agency while enrolled in the internship. Students are expected to work a MINIMUM of six (6) hours per week (90 hours in a semester) at their internship.

## **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

### **Project Folder**

The project folder contains materials related to your internship. Ideally, these would be items you yourself created/drafted during your internship and would be included to give an idea as to what you accomplished during the quarter. Examples would include: congratulatory letters, announcements, press releases, memos, research briefs, and even excerpts from spreadsheets. Note: printouts of legislation or pending bills or printouts of legal forms used in your office DO NOT COUNT. Items in the folder must be YOUR work, not the product of others! The Project Folder will also constitute 5% of your grade.

**Project folders are to be turned in EITHER to the instructor during regular business hours OR submitted as PDF files to the drop box on Carmen no later than 11:59pm on Monday, April 28.**

NOTE: if your internship requires the handling of confidential materials that cannot be released, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to determine an alternative assignment.

### **Informational Interviews**

During the course of your internship you are to select two individuals that you work with and conduct a semi-formal interview with them. It would be best if these individuals work at different tasks at the internship so that you get the advantage of a diversity of experiences. What you ask each of the interviewees is up to you; however, there should be an underlying/guiding theme to the interviews so think about what it is you want to learn from this person. For example, you might choose to question them as to their individual responsibilities and how they see themselves within the larger organization. You can then follow up on how they see your particular function as it relates to the office as a whole. You might choose to use “career” as your theme and question them as to how they went about preparing for their particular jobs and where they see themselves in five or ten years, then inquire as to steps that you should be taking or advice that s/he could give regarding your own progression. Please include your reflections on each of these interviews. NOTE: Information from these interviews can be worked into the Career Development Plan. Each interview will constitute 5% of your grade.

**Interviews are to be submitted as PDF files to the drop box on Carmen according to the following schedule:**

**1<sup>st</sup> interview must be turned in not later than 11:59pm on Friday, February 7**

**2<sup>nd</sup> interview must be turned in not later than 11:59pm on Friday, February 28**

### **Assigned Reading and Discussion Board Postings**

Your internship is an opportunity for you to compare academic theory to the real world. It also provides opportunities develop your professional contacts and this network should include other OSU students who are also working at an internship this semester. To facilitate this networking opportunity and give you the opportunity to reflect on your work experiences you must post a short reply to each the question I post. Please do any assigned readings prior to posting and remember to cite the words and ideas of others correctly. The following week, you should respond to a peer's post with a comment, question or suggestion. Your answers to each posted question will be worth up to 2 points each and your follow up to a classmate's post will be worth up to 1 point.

The schedule for readings and discussion board postings is as follows:

***Response to Question 1 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, January 26***

*Question 1: Introduce yourself. Where are you working and what kind of work are you doing? What are you hoping to get out of this internship experience?*

You must also ask a question or post a comment or suggestion to another student's response to question 1 by ***11:59pm on Sunday, February 2***

***Response to Question 2 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, February 16***

*Question 2: What does your organization do? What role does it play and where does it fit in the political and institutional context? Please be sure to cite the reading(s) that helped shape your answers.*

Please read:

Gray, V. (2013). The socioeconomic and political context of states. In V. Grey, R. L. Hanson & T. Kousser (Eds.), *Politics in the American states: A comparative analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-29). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

OR

Smith, K. B. & Greenblatt, A. (2014). Introduction to state and local governments: They tax dogs in West Virginia, don't they? In *Governing states and localities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 3-26). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

AND

Hanson, R. L. (2013). Intergovernmental relations. In V. Grey, R. L. Hanson & T. Kousser (Eds.), *Politics in the American states: A comparative analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-29). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

All reading are available on CARMEN

You must also ask a question or post a comment or suggestion to another student's response to question 2 by **11:59pm on Sunday, February 23**

**Response to Question 3 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 9**

*Question 3: Based on your readings, what is the biggest surprise you have encountered? In other words, how has your experience been different from what you believed it would be at your internship? Please be sure to cite the reading(s) that helped shape your answers.*

Please read at least THREE of the following chapters. Select readings that relate best to your workplace.

Kernell, S., Jacobson, G. C. & Kousser, T. (2012). Political parties. In *The logic of American politics*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 532-585). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Smith, K. B. & Greenblatt, A. (2014). Parties and interest groups: Elephants, donkeys, and cash cows. In *Governing states and localities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 151-192). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Nownes, A. J. & Newmark, A. J. (2013). Interest groups in the states. In V. Grey, R. L. Hanson & T. Kousser (Eds.), *Politics in the American states: A comparative analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 105-131). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Kernell, S., Jacobson, G. C. & Kousser, T. (2012). Congress. In *The logic of American politics*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 238-303). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Smith, K. B. & Greenblatt, A. (2014). Legislatures: The art of herding cats. In *Governing states and localities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 193-236). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Ferguson, M. (2013). Governors and the executive branch. In V. Grey, R. L. Hanson & T. Kousser (Eds.), *Politics in the American states: A comparative analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 208-250). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Smith, K. B. & Greenblatt, A. (2014). Local government: Function follows form. In *Governing states and localities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 317-346). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Kernell, S., Jacobson, G. C. & Kousser, T. (2012). The Bureaucracy. In *The logic of American politics*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 354-399). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Hall, M. G. (2013). State courts: Politics and the judicial process. In V. Grey, R. L. Hanson & T. Kousser (Eds.), *Politics in the American states: A comparative analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 251-278). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Smith, K. B. & Greenblatt, A. (2014). Courts: Turning law into politics. In *Governing states and localities* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 275-316). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

You must also ask a question or post a comment or suggestion to another student's response to question #3 due by **11:59pm on Sunday, March 16**

***Response to Question #4 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 6***

*Question 4: What is the biggest challenge facing your employer? How might it be overcome? Please be sure to cite the reading(s) that helped shape your answer.*

You must also ask a question or post a comment or suggestion to another student's response to question 4 due by **11:59pm on Sunday, April 13**

***Response to Question #5 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 20***

*Question 5: What was the biggest challenge for you, personally, at this internship? How did you address it?*

You must also ask a question or post a comment or suggestion to another student's response to question 5 due by **11:59pm on Sunday, April 27**

**Career Development Plan**

This assignment is not intended to be a 10-page paper. You could accomplish all that is required in three to five pages. However, you do need to be thoughtful in exploring each section. Feel free to be creative in brainstorming possible ways to achieve your goals. It is not acceptable to say that you do not have any ideas related to the sections because your internship experiences have been limited. Remember you get out of your internship what you put into it – you may have to be more proactive in ensuring you get out of your internship what you need to help ensure your professional success. This assignment should be turned into the appropriate drop box on Carmen no later than **11:59pm on Friday, March 28** and will also constitute 20% of your grade.

***Section I – Where am I going? Finding Your FOCUS.***

In this section, identify and discuss the kind of career and work which interests you. You do not need to identify a specific position, but I want you to think about the kinds of tasks you would like to perform, the environment in which you would like to work, responsibility level, your lifestyle, etc. To assist in this process, you should complete the "Finding Your FOCUS" module from the On PACE program at Buckeye Careers. This is a useful resource, and while you are required to complete the first module and incorporate what you learn from it into your Career Plan, you should feel free to explore and take advantage of any others modules that interest you.

Instructions for accessing On PACE

Go to the Buckeye Careers site <http://careers.osu.edu/>

Then click on students

Click on Buckeye On PACE

Login using your OSU user name and dot number  
Go to Modules  
Select the “Finding Your FOCUS” model

## ***Section II – Skills***

As you observe the people around you in your internship, what are the necessary and valuable skills that help ensure success? Skills can be as specific as computer word-processing or as general as being able to work as part of a team. This section has two parts: skills you need to possess and skills you need to develop. As you think about this section you may want to pursue information interviews with people currently holding positions that interest you. The second On PACE module might also help you think about skills.

- A. Identify skills you possess (or are discovering that you possess) which will help you market yourself in the field of your choice in the future. What activities have you been involved with either in your internship or elsewhere that demonstrate these skills?
- B. Identify skill areas in which you are weak and in which you need to develop or grow.

## ***Section III – Contacts***

In this section, identify contacts you have made in your current internship which you can utilize in helping you achieve your career goal. Be specific on how you intend to cultivate these people to assist you in pursuing your career goals. In addition, are there contacts you **need** to make with people in certain types of positions who could help you in achieving your career goal? Identify these people and/or positions.

## ***Section IV – Plan of Action***

In this final section, create a plan of action and timetable, diagramming your efforts toward pursuing your professional goals. Have your experiences altered your career goals? What should you do next? The easiest way to accomplish this is to reflect upon your ideas and suggestions from the above sections, develop a sequence for accomplishing them, and place them into a timetable.

### **Final Report:**

All students are required to write a final report discussing their work experience. This report (typed, double spaced) should be between 5-7 pages in length.

The paper is an analysis of what you learned, how you learned it, and is not a report on “what I did this summer” or the organization of the agency. Below are some questions that you might want to address in the final internship paper. These questions are provided to guide you as to how to write this paper and what type of things should be in it. Obviously, you need not answer each question literally, and you may need to tailor the questions to suit your individual internship experience. There are many different issues not brought up here that you may want to discuss in

your final paper. These questions are merely to serve as a guideline to help you understand the assignment.

In writing the paper, please remember that you may have worked in an agency that is concerned about the confidentiality of their clients. If you are uncomfortable writing about specific people or using names, you can use initials, create names, or write the paper in such a way as to avoid using any names. Remember that no one will see these papers other than your instructor.<sup>1</sup> They will not be given to your internship supervisor. However, you need to write the paper in such a way that protects you from issues surrounding confidentiality concerns.

***Questions to think about:***

1. Did the classes you took at Ohio State prepare you for the job? What classes might have helped you? What classes do you wish you would have taken to better prepare you for this job?
2. Were there any politics within the organization? If you could change one thing about this organization to help it perform better, what would that be, and why? How could the agency be run better?
3. What was the role of minorities in your workplace? Did you notice that racial/ethnic/gender/ age minorities were treated differently? Were minority clients treated differently? Did you notice any racism/sexism/ageism in the agency?
4. What was the relationship between your agency and others that you worked with? Did the different agencies cooperate, or did they not? Did this lead to frustration? Was there a relationship between state and/or federal agencies? How did your agency fit into the “big picture”?
5. Did you learn any new skills as a result of this internship? Could these new skills help you find a job? Did you join any professional organizations?
6. What were the differences between class work and the work that you performed in the “real world”?

**The Final Report is to be submitted as a PDF file to Carmen no later than Monday, April 28, 2014.**

***Please Note:*** Carmen’s drop box will not accept file names that include certain characters, such as ' (apostrophe), " (quotes), \* (asterisk), | (vertical bar), \ (back slash), / (slash), ? (question mark), : (colon), < or > (greater than or less than), ' (back tic), & (ampersand), ; (semicolon), and # (pound sign). If you submit a file that has one of these characters in the name, it will appear in the Folder Submissions as submitted, but your instructor will not be able to read it.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless the instructor suspects that a violation of the Code of Student Conduct has been committed.

## **Student Evaluation of Internship**

**Forms are located on Carmen.**

Each student is required to complete a formal evaluation of his/her internship by the end of the semester in addition to the final paper. The forms are located at the back of the 4191 enrollment packet. **Evaluations are to be turned in EITHER to the instructor during regular business hours OR submitted as PDF files to the drop box on Carmen no later than 11:59pm on Friday, April 25.**

## **Evaluation of the student' Internship Performance by the Internship Supervisor.**

**Forms are located on Carmen.**

Each student is required to secure a formal evaluation from his/her internship supervisor by the end of the semester. The forms are located at the back of the 4191 enrollment packet. **Evaluations are to be turned in EITHER to the instructor during regular business hours OR submitted as PDF files to the drop box on Carmen no later than 11:59pm on Friday, April 25.**

Papers must be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch top, bottom, and side margins, have numbered pages, and display a reasonable font size. A cover sheet is NOT required. Excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors will affect the student's grade.

## **Method of Course Evaluation**

➤ Project Folder	5 points
➤ Informational Interviews (2)	10 points
➤ Discussion Board	15 points
➤ Career Development Plan	20 points
➤ Final Report	20 points
➤ Supervisor's Evaluation	30 points
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	100 points

## **Grades**

Grades will be awarded based on the following formula:

94 points or more = A  
90-93.99 points = A-  
88-89.99 points = B+  
82-87.99 points = B  
80-81.99 points = B-  
78-79.99 points = C+  
72-77.99 points = C  
70-71.99 points = C-  
68-69.99 points = D+  
62-67.99 points = D



*While I do not anticipate the need to make changes to this course, this syllabus is to be regarded as a flexible document because life and technology can surprise.  
Students will be notified of changes to the syllabus by e-mail from the instructor.*

### **Additional Items Required by the University:**

#### **Academic Integrity**

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. ***Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated.*** The Committee on Academic Misconduct investigates or establishes procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. “Academic misconduct” includes cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices. Instructors must report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)).

#### *Students with Disabilities*

If you have any condition, such as a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, or will require extra time for exams, please notify the instructor as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. **You must also contact the university’s Office of Disability Services to receive appropriate documentation. All information and documentation of disability are confidential.** For further information, contact ODS, 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone, 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/confidential>

#### **Avoiding Plagiarism**

Much of your college education will involve learning what others have written and then integrating those ideas into your own thinking. However, in academic writing any ideas or words not credited to another are assumed to be those of the author. The problem of plagiarism comes in when you fail to give credit for those ideas that are not original to you. The word *plagiarism* (from the Latin for “kidnapping”) refers to the unacknowledged use of another’s words, ideas, or information. Your instructor will introduce you to strategies to avoid plagiarism, the conventions for using and acknowledging sources, and good procedures. Your instructor will also help you to gain confidence in your own writing so that you do not feel a need to borrow the ideas and/or words of others without acknowledging that “borrowing.”

The following is a guide to help you avoid plagiarism.

#### **What need *not* be acknowledged?**

- Common knowledge. If most readers would likely know something, you need not cite it.
- Facts available from a wide variety of sources. If a number of textbooks, encyclopedias, or Almanacs include the information, you need not cite it.
- Your own ideas and discoveries.

#### **What *must* be acknowledged?**

- Any direct quotation. The **exact** words quoted must be place in quotation marks.
- Paraphrases and summaries of others' ideas and/or words that provide background information, Present facts not commonly known, and explain various positions on your topic.
- Arguable assertions. If an author presents an assertion that may or may not be true, cite the source.
- Statistics, charts, tables, and graphs from **any** source. Credit all graphic material even if you Create the graph.

The Ohio State University considers the purchase of research papers or the employment of a person or agency to prepare such papers to be academic misconduct. In addition, though you may get help in writing your paper, there are limits to the amount of help you can honestly receive. For instance, others may read over your paper and point out weaknesses, but they must not rewrite the paper for you.

A problem can also occur if you want to submit a paper for one class that you have already submitted to another instructor for another class. To avoid this problem, discuss the paper with your current instructor before handing it in.