

Brigham Young University
Political Science 391: Advanced Seminar on Current Issues
Spring/Summer 2013

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 5-8 p.m.

Course Objectives

There are two components to Washington Seminar: your internship; and information from experts, both in person and in print, about major national and international concerns. The 399 class mostly addresses the internship. The 391 class primarily builds on the expert briefings.

This course (391) is designed to help you learn how Washington works and how public policy is shaped. You will listen to first-hand accounts from government (public) and non-government (private) officials who participate in the policy-making process, formally and informally. After this experience, I hope you will understand the political process better and be motivated to actively participate in your community, state, nation, and world in the political process of policy-making.

The class will be conducted primarily on Fridays during your stay in Washington: Reserve all day Friday for class. Each Friday we will have three sessions (as a general rule)—class with the instructor and two briefings with political practitioners—either at the Barlow Center or on location at the office or agency of the person offering the briefing. Some weeks we may have a briefing on a weekday evening to suit the schedule of the briefer.

The general themes highlighted will be:

Who shapes policy and how?

What makes advocacy influential?

What are major issues that our country faces, both at home and abroad?

To make the most of these opportunities, you will prepare carefully for each briefing and think critically about the experience after the fact.

Learning Outcomes

1. Be intellectually enlarged: politics, international relations, and political philosophy. Students should enhance and build upon study in the discipline. Students should examine policies and institutions with the intent of seeing how the overall policy-making processes and institutions might be ameliorated.

2. Be intellectually enlarged: political process, theory, and thought. Students should possess a factual and theoretical knowledge of countries, political processes, political theories, and political thought.
3. Be intellectually enlarged: effective and professional writing. Students should write professional grade papers on political science questions.
4. Have a lifelong desire to learn and serve: participation in political processes. Students should participate effectively in political processes by having an appropriate knowledge of international and national politics and political thought. During the course of this semester, students should identify some best practices which might improve both the overall U.S. system of governance and the ability of government officials in Washington, D.C. to represent the citizens of the United States of America more effectively.
5. Have a lifelong desire to learn and to serve: community service. Students should want to serve the communities and organizations to which they belong.
6. Have stronger character: integrity in daily and civic activities. Students should bring honesty and integrity to daily life, public affairs, and professional activities.
7. Have stronger character: effective citation. Students should properly cite sources using a recognized citation style.
8. Be spiritually strengthened: faith and political analysis. Students should be able to articulate principles of faith in political analysis. Students should always remember what is cited in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 134:1: "We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that He holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society," and apply this to studies.

Readings

There is one required book:

Bob Graham with Chris Hand. 2010. *America, The Owner's Manual: Making Government Work for You*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

We will read this book in the first two weeks of class as the foundation for the briefings that follow. Other required readings will be chosen week by week in preparation for each topic and guest speaker. They will be distributed or linked to via email.

You are required to read a major national newspaper *each weekday*. *The Washington Post* is the best choice for DC. Many of you will have copies of *The Washington Post* at your workplace. You may also read it on the Internet. Other newspapers with excellent coverage of American politics include *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Class Attendance and Participation

Over the course of the semester, we will be privileged to hear from a wide range of Washington experts drawn from a variety of occupations. I will generally let you know the speakers and

times a week before. If you need to know what is scheduled for a particular day, talk with me and I will let you know the tentative schedule.

Flexibility will be critical. All briefing schedules can change at any time. Things come up, and speakers may have to cancel and reschedule. I will keep you informed of changes and request that you be understanding. People with significant voices are in great demand, and we need to be able to respond to changes. I will email you the schedule each week. If there are changes, I will send out more emails.

Attendance and *quality* participation are essential to the success of this class. Roll will be taken each week and students will be penalized for absences and lack of preparation and quality participation. Only absences due to illness or work *required* by your internship supervisor are excused. Work related absences will be rare and must be cleared with me in advance. The following are not excused absences: choosing to go to your internship, job interviews, family events (including visits from parents, but they can join us for the briefings), excursions or out-of-town trips, and alternative briefing opportunities. You should not schedule anything before mid-afternoon on Fridays, and before doing so, check to make sure we do not have a late briefing scheduled.

You are also expected to attend any Barlow Center lectures in office attire. This semester, we will have at least one of these, the Faith and Public Service Lecture sponsored by the Church. The speaker, date, and time are still being worked out. It usually takes place on a weekday evening at the Barlow Center.

Code of Conduct for Briefings:

All briefings are off the record and not for attribution, unless announced otherwise. This means that you cannot record the briefing or reference the briefing in a public forum. (You can always refer to the briefings in papers for the class.) This means that you should not blog, tweet, or use your Facebook page to criticize a briefer. Such behavior is unprofessional, and will result in a low participation grade. You should also not do anything like this with your internship, as the internship provider would most likely fire you if you did violate this policy.

Always *arrive early* (at least five minutes or more if required) for a briefing. Arriving late is discourteous to our speaker and reflects poorly on BYU generally. If you are even one minute late you can expect to be denied entry—especially if we are visiting someone at an office that requires a security check. Late entries make the entire group look bad and are unprofessional. Upon arriving early and finding your seat, focus your attention (and your small talk) on the theme to be discussed in the briefing. In other words, behave professionally and maximize your preparation.

Always dress and act appropriately. Men should wear dress pants and tie (even better: jacket and tie), and women appropriate conservative, professional attire. Slouching, dozing off, texting, not being attentive, or surfing the web during briefings is unacceptable, will make you look foolish, and reflects badly on BYU. Many of our speakers will be dynamic and exciting. Unfortunately, a few will not be. Please continue to be attentive anyway.

You should always know something about the speaker and the topic before the briefing. The Google requirement mentioned below is the bare minimum. The assigned readings are to help you develop some basic knowledge of the issue to be addressed. During the week, pay close attention to articles in *The Washington Post* that relate to the briefing topic. Check out the speaker's website.

Ask respectful and reasonable questions. It is very likely you will disagree with the views of some speakers. This is by design. Remember it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable. You are welcome and encouraged to challenge the assertions, facts, or assumptions of any speaker. However, be certain to do so in a *polite and respectful manner*. After you ask one question, please allow everyone else to ask questions before asking another. (Do not attempt to disguise multiple questions as a single multi-part question. A follow-up question is also another question.) I realize that you might have a second fantastic question that you would like to ask. I am consciously choosing quantity over quality: I want everyone to have a chance to ask a question. If I sense that everyone who wishes has asked a question, and I want the briefing to continue, I will ask a question. Then you may ask a second question.

Please abide by all of these guidelines. I will not hesitate to reduce participation scores for inappropriate behavior. For repeated offenses, I have no qualms about reducing the score more than the percentage assigned: You can go below zero on this score.

Assignments

Pre-quizzes

There will be pre-quizzes on the Graham book on the first two days of class. On the first class day, the pre-quiz will be on the Prologue, Introduction, and Chapters 1-5. On the second class day, the pre-quiz will be on Chapters 6-10.

Pre-briefing Reading Responses

Reading responses are due Thursday mornings at 8 a.m. by email. Readings are assigned to help you think about the topics addressed in the briefings and help you prepare for writing assignments. I want you to make connections between the new things you are learning and the things you already know. Short reading responses are designed to do this. For each assigned reading, write a paragraph that takes one of the following four forms:

1. **Intra-class connection.** Example: This reading reminded me of the earlier reading by.... The connection I see is.... This author reads the evidence differently because....
2. **Cross-curriculum connections.** Example: This reading got me thinking about a similar problem last semester in my economics class....
3. **Data connections.** Example: This reading implied that all politicians are genuinely seeking to pursue policy goals, yet *The Washington Post* just carried a story reporting that stocks "picked" by members of Congress beat the market...
4. **Puzzlement.** Example: This reading argued that proposed policy changes should be narrowly focused. But we read something earlier by the same author that said to make a

proposed change successful, it must attract a large audience of support. How can these both be right?

After your paragraphs on each reading, write down one interesting fact obtained from a Google (or other) search about each briefer beyond the information I provide you. And finally, write down one question that you could pose in each briefing. This question should not be so generic that you could ask it of any person (e.g. “What does your typical day look like?”), but something specific to the briefer. Most weeks, we have 4 readings and 2 briefers. Thus, your reading response will usually have 4 paragraphs on the readings, 2 sentences of interesting facts, and 2 questions you could pose.

Send the response via email by **Thursday at 8 a.m.** (goodliffe@byu.edu). Send the response in the body of the email, not as an attachment. Include your name and date in the body of the email as well. A subject heading would also be helpful, such as, “WS: RR 5/24.” The reading responses are graded pass/fail. Turning in responses after 8 a.m. on Thursday will cost 50%. No credit is given for responses turned in after the briefing.

Papers

Writing assignments are due on Friday morning at the beginning of the meetings unless otherwise indicated. All deadlines are firm. Grades will be reduced 20% for each day an assignment is late. Arrange your schedule to meet these deadlines. If you have an emergency, email me the assignment (as an attachment), and slide a hard copy under my office door later.

Midterm Paper: The Founders and Contemporary Government

Compare and contrast the current federal government’s *size and powers* with what the Founders expected when drafting the Constitution. This paper responds to learning objectives by linking past practices with present ones. Use material from the readings, the Constitution Center, the Independence Hall tour, the film “A More Perfect Union,” and the presentations at the Freedoms Foundations and other places to form your image of the Founders’ state of mind in 1789. Compare their original intent to current practice. Focus on three elements that you explore in detail. These elements will give you specific things to write about and not leave you reliant on vague (even if correct) observations like, “the Founders expected our government to be smaller.” Outside research is not necessary to complete this assignment, but better papers will show evidence of considering a range of sources (and not just two or three). Please note: This paper is *not* about what any specific Founder *wanted*. Rather, it is about what the Founders *expected*. This paper is also *not* about what the current federal government’s size and powers *should* be, whether your opinion or the Founders’ opinions or others’ opinions. The paper should be 1200 words or fewer, which is usually about 4 pages, double-spaced.

Final Paper: How to Solve a Political Problem

Identify a problem confronting your local community, state, or the nation, and *propose how you will get the government to solve the problem*. This paper is meant to demonstrate your knowledge about how to be an effective citizen in an area that you care about. The paper should

have three sections of unequal length: (1) patterns of effectiveness; (2) the problem; and (3) your solution.

First, discuss why some people or groups are more effective than others at influencing government (e.g. bureaucracy, legislature, courts). Using readings (especially Graham) and the briefings, identify three or four overall factors that increase the odds of being influential. Illustrate these factors using examples drawn from readings, briefings, or current events (from *The Washington Post*). Second, your paper should state the specifics of the problem you wish to solve without spending more than a page explaining why it is a problem. Third, much of your paper should explain the nuts and bolts of your plan for achieving a solution.

Your paper must include details about the focus of your efforts to influence government and why the level of government you have chosen is the most appropriate for your particular problem. You should integrate multiple course topics, e.g. how to lobby government officials, how to use the media, etc., and your explanation should be very specific in several places. Examples here could include naming specific government officials, citing specific laws or legal texts, or noting important deadlines. You should demonstrate adequate knowledge about parameters of the policy-making process, name specific coalition partners and news media outlets, etc. Excellent papers will identify both the potential opposition and your plan to deal with that opposition. Throughout your solution section, connect your proposed plan back to the general factors that increase influence. If you are not using those factors, you should either explain why or rethink your plan or the factors.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Narrowly focus the problem and the proposed solution: Improving national education policy is impossibly vague. Making an incremental adjustment to hiring standards for school teachers in your local district is much more specific (and realistic). Your solution may not quite solve the problem, but you can succeed on this paper by proposing a solution that is a step in the right direction.
- Be realistic with your proposed solution: If the first step of your plan is to go to law school, you are headed in the wrong direction. If your plan is to be elected to the U.S. Senate or head a foundation with billions of dollars in assets, that will take too long. You should be persuasive that you *currently* have the skills and resources to have a chance at following through with your plan. Doing so will also help you narrow the focus of your paper appropriately.
- Your solution should not be to change something at BYU unless you plan on getting the government to solve the problem.
- The paper should be under 2500 words, or about 8 pages, double-spaced.

Enrichment Activity

One Friday during the semester no briefings will be held so that you can pursue an enrichment activity. This activity should focus on history or the arts. A variety of activities are possible, such as visiting a historical site or museum, touring one of the many art museums, or attending a play or concert (no movies). This is an opportunity for you to visit a site that may only be open during business hours when you are either at work or in class. Write a short report briefly

summarizing the experience and discussing what you learned from the activity. Discuss not only individual details that were learned through the visit, but reflect overall on what was learned through the experience. This is graded pass/fail. Papers that fail will not follow basic expectations for a writing assignment and will contain nothing interesting or thoughtful. The paper should be about one page, double-spaced (about 300 words).

Service Learning Experience

One Saturday during the semester will be dedicated to a group service project in the District of Columbia. In a short paper, relate the service you provide to your own ideals about service. This is graded pass/fail. Papers that fail will not follow basic expectations for a writing assignment and will contain nothing interesting or thoughtful. The paper should be about one page, double-spaced (about 300 words).

Grading Criteria

In general, follow the guidelines outlined in “Standards for Student Papers” from the *Washington Seminar Handbook*. The BYU Writing Center has also recently published a [writing guide](#) that has other suggestions. Quality writing is usually correlated with how much time is taken to edit the paper (or how many drafts are written). Samuel Johnson said/wrote: “What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.” Here are some specific grading criteria:

- Address the subject and fulfill the assignment as stated.
- Analyze, incorporate and synthesize material from relevant briefings, field trips, assigned readings, class discussions, and relevant articles from the *Post*.
- Include a clear thesis statement (primary argument) that guides the structure of paper. The thesis statement is usually presented along with an outline of the paper in the introductory paragraph.
- Arguments are clear, well-stated, and analytical. Clear arguments do not include internal contradictions or leave questions unanswered. Arguments using logic show how one thing implies another. Arguments using evidence produce specific examples, citations of other work, etc. The arguments all relate to and support contention of the thesis. The arguments are not overstated; exceptions or qualifications are acknowledged.
- Use an academic or professional (“white paper”) style of writing, not a journal entry, or letter home, or an angry blog entry: no exclamation points, no contractions, no worthless adverbs (e.g. completely, definitely, honestly, hopefully, incredibly, really, very, etc.).
- Contain adequate sourcing and citations. If you are not sure whether to cite something, cite it. If you state something that is common knowledge—Barack Obama won the 2012 presidential election—then you do not need a citation. If you have to look something up to write it in your paper—Barack Obama won 26 states and DC—then you should cite it (CNN 2012). If you learned something during the course of this class, then you should cite where you learned it from (e.g. reading, Constitution Center, George Washington actor, etc.).
- Writing mechanics are good, including clear organization and transitions.
- Be virtually free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
- Bibliography and citations follow an accepted style (e.g. Chicago, Turabian, APA).

- Papers are double-spaced, stapled, and numbered; have a title page with name, date, title, and number of words.

An “A” paper will conform to these guidelines. Papers that merely summarize or outline the briefings and readings will receive no more than a “C” grade.

Another style note: Refrain from excessive personalization. It is not necessary to begin sentences with phrases such as “I think that,” “I feel that,” “I suspect that,” and “I [would] argue that”: Every sentence in a paper could begin with such a phrase. It is assumed that every sentence you write is your thought or argument. These phrases only need to be used in a paper if you mean to say, “I assert without accompanying logic or evidence that”

If you disagree with a paper grade, follow the instructions [here](#). The short version is that you should turn in a clean version of the paper, I will read it much more carefully and issue a new grade, and that grade could be higher or lower (or the same as) the previous grade. The new grade replaces the old grade.

Grading

Your grade will be computed using a standard scale (87-89: B+, 84-86: B, etc.) as follows:

Pre-quizzes	5%
Class Attendance and Participation	20
Reading Responses	20
Midterm Paper	15
Final Paper	30
Enrichment Activity	5
Service Learning Project	5
Total	100%

Other Course Policies

Email Policy

All class members must maintain an active email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that the email address that is listed for you in the BYU directory is accurate. To update your email address, log in to myBYU and select “Update my Personal Information.” Here you can specify a current email address if you are not using the one assigned to you by BYU, or you can have your BYU email forwarded to the account you plan to use. The instructor and assistant will communicate time-sensitive class announcements via email. Check your email daily throughout the semester. Email is also a good way to reach me with questions. In fact, if you have anything important to ask or notify me about, you should email it to me: We will then both have a record of it. Do not rely on me to remember anything you say to me in person.

Academic Honesty

From the Academic Honesty section of the BYU Honor Code: “The first injunction of the BYU Honor Code is the call to ‘be honest.’ Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. ‘President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education’ (The Aims of a BYU Education, p. 6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim.

“BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.”

Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must, in fact, be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade and additional disciplinary action.

If you write a paper for another course (past or present) that uses the same topic as a paper for this course, you need to approve it with me *first*, and then you must turn in to me a copy of the paper from your other course.

Honor Code

Students are expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. It is the university’s expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards.

You can read the Honor Code, including examples of various forms of academic misconduct at honorcode.byu.edu. If you have any questions about academic conduct, I encourage you to consult these web pages and/or come speak with me.

Students with Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (801-422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 801-422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Discrimination

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 801-422-5895 or 801-367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a serious problem. One way to protect yourself from sexual harassment and from charges of sexual harassment is to be scrupulously appropriate with all individuals you come in contact with.

By law, Brigham Young University is obligated to protect its students from gender discrimination, including unlawful sexual harassment, in all programs and activities sponsored by the university. As you embark on your internship, please be aware of what constitutes sexual harassment and what you should do if you encounter it during your internship opportunity.

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- The conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples

Behaviors that contribute to a hostile environment include, but are not limited to:

- Discussing sexual activities
- Telling off-color jokes
- Unnecessary touching
- Commenting on physical attributes
- Displaying sexually suggestive pictures
- Using crude language or demeaning or inappropriate terms
- Using indecent gestures
- Engaging in hostile physical conduct

Appropriate Response

Both employers and employees have a responsibility to prevent and stop workplace harassment. If you experience harassment while participating in a BYU-sponsored internship, report the behavior to your internship coordinator and your experience provider. They will take appropriate action to address and correct the behavior.

You may also contact the university's Equal Opportunity Manager or 24-hour hotline at:

Equal Opportunity Manager

Brigham Young University

Telephone: (801) 422-5895

Email: sue_demartini@byu.edu

24-hour hotline: 1 (888) 238-1062

<http://www.ethicspoint.com>