

**Brigham Young University**  
**Political Science 399R: Washington Seminar Internship**  
**Fall 2009**

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Office hours: by appointment

### **Course Overview and Objectives**

This course joins your internship experience and observations together with more traditional academic material by requiring you to put your day-to-day internship experiences into a broader academic framework. This is achieved through research and writing related to your internship. Your grade is jointly determined by your performance in your internship and written assignments. The assigned papers will have you fit your work assignment into the broader picture of national policy-making.

The written work consists of several components, calibrated in proportion to the number of 399R credit hours for which you are registered. Following is the break-down of assignments.

### **Grading:**

#### **Grade Breakdown for Nine Credit Hours of 399R:**

- Supervisor Evaluation 25%
- Research Proposal 5%
- Personal Professional Development: 5%
- Organization Analysis and Critique 10%
- Portfolio 20%
- Research Paper (15-18 Pages) 35%

#### **Grade Breakdown for Six Credit Hours of 399R:**

- Supervisor Evaluation 25%
- Research Proposal 5%
- Personal Professional Development: 5%
- Organization Analysis and Critique 10%
- Portfolio 30%
- Research Paper (8-10 Pages) 25%

#### **Grade Breakdown for Three Credit Hours of 399R:**

- Supervisor Evaluation: 25%
- Personal Professional Development: 10%
- Organization Analysis and Critique 20%
- Portfolio 45%

A standard grading scale will be used to assign grades.

## **Assignments and Due Dates**

Items are due *in class* on the day indicated. Papers submitted after these dates will be penalized 10% for each day they are late.

### **Personal Professional Development Paper. Due September 18.**

Systematically consider your particular role within your internship organization. Write 2-3 pages that includes the following:

- Your basic job description and your place in the organizational hierarchy (very brief).
- The skills required to perform your job well.
- A discussion of learning objectives and goals for your internship. Some of these should be devoted to improving your skills. Refer to pages 21-27 of the Washington Seminar Student Handbook for a list of possible learning objectives.
- Discuss some of these items with your supervisor and include any comments or suggestions that are made in your paper.

### **Research Proposal (6 and 9 credit hour students only). Due October 2.**

Submit a research proposal for your final research project. The length of this will vary, but 3-5 pages should be adequate. Your research design should include a brief introduction to your topic (with references to any relevant literature), a clear statement of your research question, and a plan to collect the necessary data for the paper (e.g. specialized secondary sources unique to your internship, in depth interviews, statistical data...). Note that this is a design to do original research, not a design to just go out and read existing secondary sources. You must read those secondary sources before you write the research design in order to figure out what original research needs to be done. Political Science majors, International Relations majors, and other social science students should frame their research question in terms of dependent and independent variable(s). As you consider a topic take advantage of the resources and access afforded you by your internship. Choose a topic that is closely related (or identical!) to the work you are already doing. Talk to your supervisor about this assignment and ask for advice or help in choosing a topic. It will open doors for you at work and create a win/win situation.

### **Organizational Analysis and Critique. Due November 20.**

Systematically analyze the nature of your internship organization. Write 4-6 pages that includes at least the following:

- Description of the organization, including official purposes (as described in its mission statement), organizational achievements and future goals, historical origins, funding sources, personnel size and qualifications, and organizational structure (and where it fits into a broader organization, if at all).
- Analysis of the organization's performance in relation to its mission, historical origins, funding, and goals. Why is or why is it not successful in accomplishing its mission? What is its decision-making process (officially and actually)? What recommendations would you make to improve the organization's performance? Why do you think it would improve the performance? Why do you think your recommendation has not already been

tried or adopted? Be honest but realistic. Take into account the resources and powers at the disposal of the agency, as well as the constraints and obstacles it faces. Over half of the paper should be on this second point.

**Portfolio. Due January 4** (December 11, if graduating in December).

Over the course of your internship you will increase your skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. Documenting this growth can be both rewarding and interesting, particularly in the months and years after the internship when you will want to have some tangible evidence of your experience. A portfolio is a good way to document your work and illustrate your knowledge and skill development.

A good portfolio can contain a variety of entries, including correspondence (both memoranda and letters), reports written for your supervisor or other staff in the organization, notes on meetings or projects, or other general observations from your experience. Include anything that you feel demonstrates your skill or knowledge acquisition in the internship. Be careful not to include anything that might be considered confidential unless you have your work supervisor's permission to do so.

*Entry cover page.* Each entry in the portfolio must include a typed cover page with a section (paragraph) addressing each of the following:

- Explanation of the entry
- Skills acquired as a result of working on this entry: e.g. writing, interpersonal, computer, analytical, research, quantitative, etc.)
- Knowledge that you have gained or improved as a result of working on this entry
- Questions raised or ideas for future investigation (either during the internship or later) that have come to you as a result of having worked on this entry. If possible, in this section state a concept, principle, etc. from your previous on-campus course work that relates to the entry.

There are examples on pages 19-20 of the Washington Seminary Student Handbook. Give thoughtful attention to your response to the last section. Your answer to this question is significant and will be used to evaluate whether or not you are reflective about your work and its relevance to previous course work in the discipline.

The cover pages should be written over the course of the internship at the same time the portfolio entries are completed. It is less effective (and strongly discouraged) if you write them all at the end of the internship just prior to submitting your portfolio.

*Internship summary paper.* At the beginning of the portfolio include an internship summary paper in which you describe:

- knowledge you gained of institutions, processes, concepts related to previous study;
- skills you improved or acquired;
- understanding of career possibilities you acquired; and
- your personal growth from the experience.

Reference the entries in your portfolio as evidence of your development in the above areas. This paper need not be long, but should be of sufficient length to show that you have been reflective about your experience and to explain why the internship was meaningful for you and how it

enhanced your education. You may wish to share a copy of this paper with your work supervisor.

*Format.* Assemble the portfolio in a three-ring binder and submit it to the Washington Seminar Faculty Advisor by the deadline indicated in the assignment schedule. The presentation should be professional and organized. Ten percent of the portfolio grade will be based on the quality of the presentation.

*Grading Criteria.* A portfolio deserving of an A grade will have at least 12 entries with well written, reflective cover pages and summary paper. It will be well organized and professionally presented. Portfolios that are lacking in any of the above qualities, but have reflective cover pages and summary paper will merit a B. Those that are merely descriptive or have few entries will receive only a C grade.

Final Research paper (6 and 9 credit hour students only). **Due January 4** (December 11, if graduating in December).

The standards listed on pages 30 and 31 of the Washington Seminar Student Handbook are a good guide for this paper. Political Science and International Relations majors should follow the guidelines of Political Science 200. We will discuss this paper in more detail during class. I welcome individual conversations about your research papers.

### **Other Course Policies**

The policies for 391 also apply to this class. To save space and paper I have not repeated them here. Please refer to your 391 syllabus.