

**Political Science 399R: Washington Seminar Internship**  
**Brigham Young University**  
**Winter 2021**

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Internships: January 11 through April 15

Office Hours: TBA

Email: goodliffe@byu.edu (preferred way to contact me with academic,  
non-emergency matters)

Phone: 

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### **Course Overview**

This course joins your internship experience and observations together with more traditional academic material by requiring you to put your daily 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 on your written assignments. The written work consists of several components, calibrated to the number of 399R credit hours for which you are registered.

Since much of the course work requires you to be self-directed, it is important that you keep track of deadlines and submit the assignments on time. The assignment schedule is intended to have you examine and reflect on the various aspects of the experience at key times in the internship.

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### **Learning Objectives**

- Students will build skills in effective research, analysis, and writing that will be useful for future course work and, eventually, professional life.
  - Students will learn through personal experience how to influence the policy process and will explore career possibilities that will enhance their prospects for future employment.
  - Students will demonstrate honesty, integrity, and character in their daily lives, public engagement, and professional activities.
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### **Expectations, Responsibilities, and Course Policies**

The policies and grading criteria for POLI 391 also apply to this class.

In addition to the duties and conduct related to your internship, you are responsible for the information and requirements outlined in the Washington Seminar Student Handbook.

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## Assignments and Grading

Students completing internships for credit occasionally misunderstand the importance of the reports and the written work in determining their final grade. Usually this is due to assuming—mistakenly—that the credit will be an easy A, resulting from just having performed well in their internship. To be sure, completing the internship work successfully is a critical component of your evaluation, but you should also realize that the academic work you submit is also a significant part of the assessment process in this course, and this work must be of superior quality.

Please be aware that your previous academic preparation (e.g., writing and research skills) and effort expended will impact your performance in this course; however, your *perception* of your effort—is not enough to justify a distinguished grade.

The following is the breakdown of assignments and their weight for your overall course grade, contingent upon the number of credits you are taking:

### ***Three credit hours:***

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation: 25%
- Personal Professional Development: 10%
- Organization Analysis and Critique: 20%
- Portfolio with 6 entries: 45%

### ***Six credit hours:***

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation: 25%
- Research Proposal: 5%
- Personal Professional Development: 5%
- Organization Analysis and Critique: 10%
- Portfolio with 9 entries: 30%
- Research Paper (2500-3000 words): 25%

### ***Nine credit hours:***

- Internship Supervisor Evaluation: 25%
- Research Proposal: 5%
- Personal Professional Development: 5%
- Organization Analysis and Critique: 10%
- Portfolio with 12 entries: 20%
- Research Paper (5000-6000 words): 35%

## ***Professional Development Paper***

Systematically consider your particular internship role within your organization. Write a paper 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 what you hope to learn and other objectives for your internship. Some of these should be devoted to improving specific skills. Please select 2-3 of the objectives that you intend to focus on.

You should discuss some of these items with your supervisor. It will help your supervisor to know you are serious and thoughtful, and in knowing your goals and objectives, your supervisor may steer opportunities your way. In addition, your supervisor may help you choose goals and objectives that are realistic.

The paper should be 600-900 words (double-spaced). Due Tuesday, February 2, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite. Turn in a hard copy as well to my office.

### ***Organization Analysis and Critique***

Analyze your internship organization in a paper that includes the following three sections:

- Description of the organization: its official purposes (as described in its mission statement) and unofficial purposes, historical origins, size of budget and 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: How successful is it in relation to its goals? What metric do you use to assess its performance? Why is or why is it not successful in accomplishing its goals? What is its decision-making process (officially and actually)?
- Critique of the organization: What recommendations would you make to improve the organization's performance? Why do you think following these recommendations would improve 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.

Less than half the paper should be description. Over half the paper should be analysis and critique. The paper should be 1200-1800 words (double-spaced). Due Tuesday, March 16, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite. Turn in a hard copy as well to my office.

### ***Supervisor Evaluation***

At least one week before you complete your internship, give your supervisor the Washington Seminar Intern Final Evaluation form (available on Learning Suite or on the Washington Seminar website). Ask your supervisor to complete the form and send it to the Faculty Director by Friday, April 16 (via mail, email, or in a sealed envelope that you send to the Faculty Director). This is also a good time to request a letter of recommendation.

### ***Portfolio***

During your internship, you will increase your skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. A portfolio is a good way to document your this growth and illustrate your knowledge and skill development for possible employers. It also gives an important insight into your substantive work without requiring a lot of extra writing on your part.

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 supervisor's permission to do so.

Each entry in the portfolio must include a **typed cover page**. Since it is best if a cover page is one page, this can be single-spaced. Use a short paragraph to cover each of the following subjects (i.e., you should have four short paragraphs for each cover page):

- 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, state a concept, principle, etc., from your previous on-campus course work that relates to the entry.

Give thoughtful attention to your response to the last section. Your answer to this question will be used to evaluate how reflective you are 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) to write them all at the end of the internship just prior to submitting your portfolio.

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
- Your personal growth from the experience.

Reference the entries in your portfolio as evidence of your development in the above areas. This paper should be about one page, single-spaced, to show 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 with your work supervisor.

*Format.* Assemble the portfolio in a single PDF file and submit it on Learning Suite. The presentation should be professional and organized. Some method of dividing entries (e.g., table of contents, virtual tabs/bookmarks, etc.) will make the portfolio more organized and easier to read.

*Grading Criteria.* A portfolio should have at least the minimum number of entries corresponding to the number of 399R credits (i.e., six entries for three credits, nine entries for six credits, twelve entries for nine credits). Entries must include well-written, reflective cover pages and summary paper. It should be well-organized and professionally presented.

*Due Date.* Tuesday, April 20, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite.

## **Research Paper** (6- and 9-credit hour students only)

### *Research Project Proposal*

Submit a research proposal to be used to frame your final research project. The length of this will vary, but 3-5 double-spaced pages should be adequate. Your research design should include a brief introduction to your topic, 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, etc.). Note that this is a design to do original research, not a design to merely go out and read existing secondary sources. You must read those secondary sources (i.e., do research) before you write the research proposal to figure out what original research needs to be done. You should discuss these existing secondary sources in the research proposal. Political Science majors, International Relations majors, and other social science students should consider framing their research question in terms of dependent and independent variable(s) and causal mechanisms. As you consider a topic, take advantage of the resources and access afforded you by your internship. Choose a topic related to work you are already doing. Talk to your supervisor about this assignment and ask for advice or help in choosing a topic. It may create opportunities for you at work. This is a case where it is both acceptable and advisable to overlap your writing for credit with internship work.

You are also required to meet with me within a week of the deadline to go over your proposal. Due Tuesday, February 9, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite. Turn in a hard copy as well to my office.

### *Research Paper Draft*

Failure to turn in a **complete** draft of your paper by this date will result in 5% drop on your final paper grade. You are also required to meet with me within a week of the deadline to go over your draft. Due Tuesday, March 23, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite. Turn in a hard copy as well to my office.

### *Final Research Paper*

The standards listed on pages 25-27 of the Washington Seminar Student Handbook are a good starting point for this paper. Political Science and International Relations majors should follow the guidelines of POLI 200. If you are required to write a research paper, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss your research paper early in the term, and well before any due dates for this assignment.

For the six-credit class, the research paper should be 2500-3000 words, double-spaced, not including tables, graphs, and references. For the nine-credit class, the research paper should be 5000-6000 words, double-spaced, not including tables, graphs, and references. I can be convinced to accept a longer paper if the research is excellent. I will not share your research paper with your supervisor or internship provider. If your paper incorporates confidential data, I will not share your paper with anyone else. Due Thursday, April 22, 11:59 pm on Learning Suite.

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**Calendar Summary**

January 11 (M) First day of internships  
February 2 (T) Professional Development Paper due  
March 16 (T) Organizational Analysis and Critique Paper due  
April 15 (R) Last day of internships  
April 16 (F) Supervisor Evaluation due  
April 20 (T) Portfolio due

Additional requirements for students taking 6 or 9 credit hours:

February 9 (T) Research Proposal Due  
March 23 (T) Research Paper Draft Due  
April 22 (R) Research Paper Due