

PSCI 4938: CU IN DC INTERNSHIP
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The CU in DC Program offers students the opportunity to integrate theoretical concepts related to their major or minor fields of study with practical experience in an internship setting in Washington, DC. The purpose of the course is to allow students to explore the work of political, governmental, or non-governmental organizations, and the career possibilities that are available. Students will be eligible for up to three (3) credit hours.

The University requires that students work at least 40 hours at their placement per credit hour, which means no less than 240 hours for 6 credits. This is a minimum. Most internships in DC are full-time so you will easily meet the requirements. Keep in mind that your independent research for the academic component of this class is not included in your work hours. This research is to be done on your own time and should not take away from your duties as an intern. Approved placements have all agreed to provide interns with an intellectually challenging primary task. In addition, each student will receive regularly scheduled direct supervision and will be exposed to other aspects of the functioning of the office/institution.

Students should be conscious of the fact that an internship is different from an employment situation or donating your time as a volunteer. An internship is an educational experience. In the selection of a placement, the negotiation of tasks, and the manner in which you approach the completion of tasks, "learning" should be your primary objective and that of the organization in which you are placed. This is in contrast to both an employment situation you have contracted to perform defined tasks in return for remuneration and a volunteer position in which your primary objective is to further the goals of the organization or individual to whom you are donating your services.

While the primary intent of your internship is to further your learning, interns nonetheless contribute to the activities of the host institution. As a result, students are expected to maintain their commitments to their host organization and to complete their duties promptly and efficiently. At the same time, while you are on your placement, you should be reflective and analytical. Be active rather than passive. Ask questions politely and at appropriate times. When you meet or hear of people of interest, follow up and make appointments to talk in greater depth later. Take full advantage of the opportunities your internship presents. Most importantly, always ask yourself the theoretical significance of what you are experiencing. In other words, try to make connections between what you have learned in classes and what you are experiencing first-hand.

Students are also reminded that while on their placement they are representing the University of Colorado and the Department of Political Science. You are expected to dress and act appropriately. You are not to use your position for personal political advantage or to advance a personal political

agenda. Of course, if you are working in a political office, you would be expected to advance the office-holder's agenda. It is understood, however, that you will not use your position for personal gain.

Finally, while you are on your internship, enjoy yourself. Work and learning should be enjoyable experiences.

COURSE READINGS

Each student is required to read at least two books selected with the approval of the instructor. The first book should be a broad analysis of current congressional politics. Following is a list of options to get you started:

- Jason Altmire. 2017. *Dead Center: How Political Polarization Divided America and What We Can Do About It*. Sunbury Press.
- E.J. Dionne, Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann. 2017. *One Nation After Trump: A Guide for the Perplexed, the Disillusioned, the Desperate, and the Not-Yet Departed*. St. Martin's Press.
- Daniel Hopkins and John Sides, eds. 2015. *Political Polarization in American Politics*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein. 2006. *The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track*. Oxford University Press.
- Sean Trende. 2012. *The Lost Majority: Why the Future of Government is Up for Grabs – and Who Will Take it*. St. Martin's Press.

The second book, or set of articles (scholarly articles may be substituted for the second book at the rate of five articles per book), depends on the student's particular interests and research paper plans and should focus on the theme/area of your institution. For example, a student interning at Amnesty International might want to read about human rights organizations in general. This means doing some research on your own to identify a relevant book or set of articles. You should also consult your internship supervisor for any ideas they might have.

The major purpose of the readings is to provide a framework for organizing and orienting your learning experience. A secondary purpose of reading is to supplement your knowledge of the institution where you are placed. To this end, a history of the office, group, or agency might be appropriate. This secondary purpose, though, should not detract from the major purpose of the reading.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. MEETINGS

You will have at least two meetings with me during your internship via Skype. The point of the meetings is simply to check-in and report how things are going. We should have one meeting pretty early on to ensure the requirements and expectations of this course are understood. We should then have a second meeting toward the middle or end to talk about what you are learning and how your final research project is going. Of course, anytime you want to talk or have concerns you want to

share, feel free to contact me and we can have additional Skype meetings. I'm always available via email as well for anything you may want to talk about.

2. CONTRACTS

You must fill out a contract with your internship supervisor as to your expected duties. The university requires this for legal purposes so it is essential you get this done as soon as possible. The contract template is available at <http://advising.colorado.edu/students/current-students/petitions-forms>.

3. WEEKLY EMAILS

Please send me an email immediately upon your arrival at your internship and then at the end of each week to update me on what you have been doing. Include any insights, perceptions, etc. that you are getting about your experience. It will be especially useful for you to reflect on insights from the required readings that help you understand (or not) what you are experiencing in your internship. This update should be at least a full page. These emails are my main avenue for finding out what you are accomplishing so please be as detailed as possible. I want to know what is particular to your placement as well as DC so please make note of this in your emails.

4. PAPER PROPOSAL (DUE OCTOBER 1ST)

At approximately the end of the third week on site at the internship each student is expected to submit a three page typed paper. It is to present an exploratory proposal (**prospectus**) for your further academic research this semester. What do you want to find out about your organization and its role in politics or government? What are your initial expectations and beliefs about your role and the institution? In writing the paper, think about the context in which you want to place your experience. What comparisons do you want to make? Are you going to look at whether your office is like other offices at the same level or similar offices at a different level? You should present specific questions you want to get answers to while you are there. Also, it should list the things you are going to need to do to answer these questions. Ask yourself if these are things that are possible during your internship. The main goal by the end of your final paper is to describe thoroughly the role your institution has in politics or government and the implications it has for the lives of ordinary people.

Your initial paper should be derived from reading relevant chapters in the readings that you have been assigned for the semester, as well as from readings your placement supervisor suggests. Remember, though, that whenever you make an assertion of fact, you must provide a reference for that assertion. Again, your reference can be simply a conversation with a supervisor or a previous course, but you must still provide a citation. If you are unsure as to when or how to reference a paper, contact me to discuss norms and rules for attribution. There are several simple manuals available. Include a bibliography in your paper.

5. FINAL PAPER (DUE DECEMBER 7TH)

At the conclusion of the course, each student will submit a major analytical paper. I would think about the final paper as having two parts. **First, what was your personal experience and what did you learn?** How does your experience measure up to your expectations? Compare your actual “findings” (your experiences at the internship, your research) with your expectations stated in your first paper. To what degree does your experience reinforce, modify, or contradict the theory expressed in the literature you have read. Be careful and thorough. Don't make statements in your final paper that are stronger than your experience will support. Also, to as great a degree as possible, support each statement you make with specific evidence or examples. Don't say, "a conversation with my supervisor leads me to believe." Give the specific statements she or he made and why they led you to your conclusion.

Second, what role does your institution have in politics or government and what do you see as the implications for ordinary people? What type of organization is it and what is its history? What were your duties there? What does the literature say about this type of organization and the political role it plays? What did you seek to examine? How did you go about doing this? Who did you talk to and why? What events and actions did you observe? What conclusions did you reach and specifically what led you to those conclusions? What does this tell me about the political role of the organization? How are ordinary people effected by your institution?

You may organize the paper in any way you like, so think about how you wish to present your ideas. The final paper should be about 20 pages and must also include a bibliography. It may be helpful to provide an introduction and table of contents to orient the reader. Divide the paper into subsections with section headings. Tell the reader what you are going to tell her (intro), tell her (body), and then tell her again what you told her (conclusion)!

Finally, as an appendix, your paper should include a sample of any product from your duties as an intern, e.g., reports, etc.

Rubric for papers:

Clear structure and organization of paper, including a clear introduction and conclusion: 25 pts.

Clear and logical use of sources and citations, especially use of the course readings: 25 pts.

Clear and well-written body of the paper with significant evidence from your experience: 50 pts.

6. EVALUATION/REVIEW (DUE DECEMBER 14TH)

With the final paper, each student will submit an evaluation of her/his internship placement (1 page). This evaluation should focus on what your duties were, whether you believe it was a good learning experience, whether you were adequately supervised, and whether you would recommend this placement to future interns. These evaluations should be separate from your final paper so as they can be collected and used by future students.

7. THANK-YOU LETTERS (DUE DECEMBER 14TH)

Each student is expected to write thank-you letters to individuals who played significant roles assisting you during your placement. Copies of these letters are to be attached to the Review.

GRADING

The instructor sincerely hopes that each student finds her/his internship placement to be an enjoyable and beneficial learning experience. At the same time, it is crucial to note the academic evaluation in this course is separate from any benefits gained from the participatory experience itself. Grading will be solely the responsibility of the instructor. The grade will be determined by academic performance.

The paper proposal will contribute 20% of the final grade. Weekly emails will count for 30% of the grade. The final paper will contribute 50% of the final grade.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/faculty-information>.

You should also be aware of the University's Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you need an accommodation of any scheduled activity, due to a conflict with a religious holiday or observance, please let me know in writing of the conflict during the first two weeks of the semester. I will be happy to work out a suitable accommodation.