

GVPT377/376 – Capitol Hill Internship Program
Fall Term 2009
Monday 6:30-9:45pm

Instructor: Elizabeth A. Bentley-Smith
Email: ebentley@gvpt.umd.edu
Phone: (301) 405-5021

Office: 1135A Tydings Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00pm
and by appointment

Course Description

This course will examine the contemporary performance of the legislative process in the American Democratic Government System. It will provide an overall introduction to the workings of the Congressional policy processes, typologies, theories and bureaucracy at the federal level. Focus will be on the powers, organization, and rules and procedures of the United States Congress with emphasis on constitutional responsibilities and institutional procedures. The course will be split in five sections: 1) congressional representation and elections, 2) affects of interest groups and political parties on Congress, 3) congressional committees, 4) other institutional actors, and 5) policy-making.

The purpose to the Capitol Hill Internship Program is to provide an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience while integrating a theoretical perspective of the U.S. Congress and their actions. It is the students' responsibility to reflect on their experiences both in and outside of the classroom, while reading the required texts and performing their internship. "Several outcomes are expected from the totality of the internship experience and seminar: (1) an integration of theory and practice; (2) pre-professional training; (3) work experience; (4) networking; and (5) exposure to public service."

You must register for the following courses to earn a total of nine GVPT credits for this internship:
~ GVPT 377 section 0101 for 3 credits, **REG** grading method
~ GVPT 376 section 0101 for 6 credits, **Pass/Fail** grading method (elective credits only).

"The Capitol Hill Internship Program enables students who work in a Congressional Office to receive college credit. Students are expected to work *18-20 hours per week* for one semester and attend a weekly seminar in order to complete the program. Students will earn a total of nine credits for the internship and seminar. The seminar, GVPT377, comprises **three** of the nine credits and counts **as an upper-level GVPT course** for the major. The practicum, GVPT376, fills the remaining six credits and is graded on a **satisfactory/fail basis**, thus DOES NOT count toward GVPT or any other course requirements. GVPT376 will only count as elective credits toward your 120 credits needed for graduation."

Fieldwork

You are required to complete 18 to 20 hours per week for your Hill internship; however, your work schedule details are to be negotiated with your supervisor. It is beneficial to request a job description from your office; if you are unsure regarding your expectations, duties, or you have concerns for any reason, please contact me.

To make the most of your internship experience, you must be constantly aware of your surroundings. Be sure to observe all actions, including those you are not directly involved. Be mindful of staff actions, pay attention to your Congressman's agenda, and remain informed of Hill activities. Most importantly, keep in mind that you may observe confidential interactions and it is your responsibility to respect that confidence.

You were selected to participate in this program based on multiple criteria including your academic achievements and personal qualifications. These factors, along with a high level of professionalism, should be ever present during all aspects of your internship. At the end of the semester, your supervisor will complete an evaluation which I will take into consideration when determining your final grade.

Required Texts

Dodd, Lawrence and Bruce Oppenheimer. (2005) Congress Reconsidered. 8th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN #9781568028590

Herrnson, Paul S. (2007). Congressional Elections. 5th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN #9780872893382

Black, Amy. (2006). From Inspiration to Legislation: How an Idea Becomes a Bill. New York: Pearson-Longman. ISBN #9780131107540

If the text is listed in the readings for that week, s/he should be prepared to discuss that topic. This class is a learning opportunity for all students both in and out of the classroom environment. This course is not a lecture, but a seminar discussion. All students should participate equally and respect each others' view points.

Additional readings will be available through the Blackboard course page (www.elms.umd.edu). Students should visit the website during the first week of class to be sure that they have no problems obtaining the on-line reading materials. If necessary, some reserve materials will be available at the main desk of McKeldin Library.

Course Requirements

All students are expected to record, analyze, interpret, and discuss the legislative process in relation to their personal experience and assigned readings.

All reading is due on the date it is assigned. Students are expected to complete the readings in advance and come to class prepared to converse and engage each other in discussion. Be advised, participation is 20% of your final grade! In conjunction with the assigned readings, students should read daily newspapers (*The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, etc.) and Congressional dailies (*Congressional Quarterly*, *Politico*, etc.) to stay informed of current issues in U.S. politics.

Attendance is required and unexcused absences will be penalized. Since the course is only six weeks, it is imperative that you attend all classes as you are responsible for the information discussed. I understand that unavoidable conflicts sometimes arise, therefore students will be allowed one absence without penalty, no questions asked. However, if you miss class due to illness, you are required to bring a doctor's note within a timely manner. Any missed classes will reflect in your participation grade. There will be a short, 10-15 minute break during each class.

During the semester we will have guest speakers either in class or at a downtown location. When these meetings are off-campus, we will briefly meet in a designated area to discuss the class readings.

Although technology is a great tool, phones, iPods, blackberries, etc. are NOT welcome during class time.

Outline of Written Requirements

Journal Entries

Your first journal entry will be a three to four-page, typed, and double-spaced description of your job responsibilities, who you work for, your office's organizational chart, what policies are important to your Congressman, and a historical account of your Congressman (how s/he came to office and his/her electoral background). This entry is due in-class **September 14**. I will not grade this entry, but provide detailed comments so you can use it as a guide for all future papers.

Every week you will need to provide a detailed account of your internship activities and observations as related to the course readings. You will collate these reports and turn-in all of them twice during the semester (**October 19** and **December 7**). Your weekly account must be two to three-pages, typed, and double-spaced descriptions of your work experiences (aka. journal entries); so for Part I, your journal entries should total 14-21 pages. The journal entries will discuss policies your office is focusing on, bills your Congressman (or organization) are lobbying for/against and why, the media response to those policies, and how the readings relate to such issues. As an employee, you must be informed and well-versed in the topics your office is focusing their resources on, this exercise is to help you discern information and discuss its potential ramifications on your organizations' decisions.

Three Papers

The following three papers are due throughout the duration of the course.

- **Paper 1 (20%): Home Style, 6-7 pages**

Due: October 12

Discuss the concept of home style, your member's home style, how that home style helps your member accomplish his or her goals, and how it influences the operations of Congress in general.

- **Paper 2 (20%): Congressional Committees or Campaigns (choose one), 6-7 pages**

Due: November 9

2A: Congressional Committees

- Discuss your member's committee assignments, how they contribute to your member's ability to accomplish his or her goals, and how the committee system influences Congress's ability to conduct its business. What are the flaws/benefits of the committee system that you have witnessed?

2B: Congressional Campaigns

- Discuss your member's congressional campaign. What type of candidate is she/he (freshman, long-term incumbent, etc.)? What have their elections looked like in the past (close, landslide, etc.)? How do these factors affect their legislative style? How does the campaign interfere or promote Congressional activity? How does the member deal with the division between campaign and legislative office? Do you feel it is effective? Why are these barriers – campaign vs. legislative office – necessary (or are they not)?

- **Paper 3 (20%): Public Policy, 10-15 pages**

Due: December 10

Using the policy process as a framework, discuss a public policy you became familiar with through your internship. Present the history behind this policy, the politics involved in the policy process regarding the policy, the reasons different people support and/or oppose the legislation (fairly present both sides), the chances of failure/success. What are the major obstacles this policy has to being successfully passed *and*, if passed, implemented?

The Public Policy research paper will be on a specific area of policy activity in relation to a policy you became familiar with during your internship. Using the policy process as a framework, students will choose a policy, examine patterns of congressional activity in this area and explain these patterns in terms of congressional politics, structure and historical value. The following information must be discussed in the paper: the history behind this policy, the politics involved in the policy process regarding the policy, the reasons different people/parties support and/or oppose the legislation (fairly present both sides), the chances of failure/success of the policy. What are the major obstacles this policy has to being successfully passed *and*, if passed, implemented?

Please note that your opinion, albeit interesting, should not be included in this paper. The final paper is due **Thursday, December 10 at noon**. The length of the paper text (not including cover page and bibliography) should be about 10-15 pages. A bibliography is required, as you are not experts in the field (yet). The papers must include at least ten properly cited sources (at least five from in-class readings); you can choose from MLA, Chicago, or APA formats. Wikipedia is not considered a valid source in this class. Articles from newspapers and reputable magazines, journal articles, and non-fiction books are valid sources.

All papers should be well written and proofread, typed, and double-spaced. Deductions will be made for typographical, spelling and grammatical errors. Every paper must include a cover page which states your name, date the paper is due, the section of the course, the title of the paper, and the honor pledge. All papers are due at the beginning of class time; papers received after this time will be considered late and not accepted. No papers will be received via email!

Plagiarism is unacceptable in any form. All written work must be your own; copying any work in any form constitutes plagiarism and reported to the Student Honor Council. The three papers should include properly cited sources; however, these papers should not be an overuse of quotes of other authors' research. If you have any questions as to how to properly cite sources or what constitutes an excessive use of others' words, please ask me.

Grades

Journal Entries – 10%

Papers (3 total) – 60%

Class Participation – 20%

Presentation of Public Policy Paper – 10%

You will be graded on the following scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 60 or below

Office Hours

I encourage all students to take advantage of my office hours. Please feel free to stop by and discuss any and all issues relating to the course (exams, papers, discussion) or to simply chat about politics.

If these hours are not convenient, as noted, appointments can be made to meet at other times.

Email Policy

In this technological age, I understand that it is easier to contact me via email, therefore email is the primary source of communication for this course and you are responsible to check it regularly. Also, I welcome any and all emails regarding the class; however, please understand that I will not be able to respond immediately to all of your emails. My policy is that I will respond to your emails within 24-48 hours. Also, when replying, please include the original email discourse. I am not available via IM, Facebook, or any other such medium.

August 31

Structure of a Congressional Office and Legislative Setting

- 1) Discussion of syllabus and class requirements
- 2) Government Protocol and Office Etiquette

September 7

NO CLASS

September 14 → FIRST JOURNAL ENTRY DUE

- 3) Modern Congress
Read → Polsby, How Congress Evolves, Chapter 5
Read → Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 1-3
Read → Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 2

September 21

Congressional Representation: Theory and Practice

- Read → Fenno, "U.S. House Members and their Constituencies"
Read → Kingdon, Congressmen's Voting, Chapter 2
Read → Eulau and Karpis, "The Puzzle of Representation: Specifying Components of Responsiveness"
Read → Quirk and Binder, The Legislative Branch, Chapter 6

September 28

Congressional Elections

- 1) Candidates and Campaigns
Read → Herrnson, Chapters 1-3
Read → Cameron et al, "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?"
Read → Shotts, "The Effect of Majority-Minority Mandates on Partisan Gerrymandering"

October 5

- 2) Issues, Strategies and Communications
Read → Herrnson, Chapters 5, 7- 8
Read → Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 4-6
In Class Film: *The War Room*

October 12 → HOME STYLE PAPER DUE

Interest Groups

- 1) Resources
Read → Herrnson, Chapter 6
Read → Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 13

October 19 → JOURNAL ENTRIES PART I DUE

- 2) Interests and Policy-making
Read → Mills, The Power Elite
Read → Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory"
Read → Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process, Chapter 4

October 26

Political Parties: Congress, Parties, and Leadership

Read → Herrnson, Chapter 4

Read → Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 8-10

November 2

Congressional Committees

Read → Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 11-12

Read → Lee, “Bicameral Institutions and Geographic Politics: Allocating Federal Funds in the House and Senate”

Read → Hall, “Participation and Purpose in Committee Decision Making”

November 9 → CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES/CAMPAIGNS PAPER DUE

Networking in Congress

Read → Mathews, Hardball: How Politics is Played Told by One Who Knows the Game, Chapters 1-2

Read → Salisbury et al, “Who Works with Whom? Interest Group Alliances and Opposition”

Read → Black, Chapter 4

November 16

Institutional Actors and Congress

Read → Black, Chapter 7

Read → Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 10, 12

November 23

Public Policy

1) Agenda-Setting

Read → Herrnson, Chapter 10

Read → Black, Chapters, 1-3

Read → Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process, Chapter 5

November 30

2) Streams and Civil Servants

Read → Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process, Chapters 7-8

December 7 → JOURNAL ENTRIES PART II DUE

Presentation of Final Paper

- Students are asked to provide the class with a ten minute presentation of their final paper.

After the presentation students should be prepared to field questions from the class.

December 10 → FINAL PAPERS DUE at NOON – No Late Papers Accepted!!!

Disability Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact the Department Chair, Dr. Mark Lichbach (301-405-4156) and Dr. Jo Ann Hutchinson at Disabilities Support Services (301-314-7682). Dr. Hutchinson will discuss arrangements to verify the disability and establish eligibility for appropriate academic accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements; this must be completed during the first week of classes.

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

Academic Integrity

Please make sure to visit the Student Honor Council website that details the University's Code of Academic Integrity (www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html#honor_statement).

Plagiarism

“According to the University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity, plagiarism is ‘intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.’

Examples of acts that would be defined as plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word, and neglecting to both enclose the words in quotation marks *and* to cite the source
- Summarizing or paraphrasing someone else's words or ideas and failing to cite the source
- Reproducing the organization or structure of another person's work and failing to cite it
- Any other act in which someone presents someone else's intellectual material as their own, whether it involves graphics, code, data, charts, etc.

To avoid plagiarism, you must properly cite any form of intellectual property (words, ideas, graphics, data, charts, organizational structure, etc.) that is not your own with the exception of ideas or facts that are considered common knowledge.”¹

Honor Pledge

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.”

¹ http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/plag_stud_what.html