

**GVPT377/376 – Capitol Hill Internship Program
Spring 2010**

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Office: 1155 Tydings Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30pm
Class: Monday 6:30-9:45 pm

Course Description

This course will examine the contemporary performance of the legislative process in the American Democratic Government System. 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 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 student's 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).

Internship

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 Congressperson'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 [Do Not Purchase the 9th Edition]
- 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

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.

Course Requirements

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! At the beginning of the semester, each student will sign up to help facilitate discussion during two of the classes. All students are responsible for completing the reading and participating even when you are not leading class.

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 reflected in your course participation grade. If you miss class due to illness, you are required to bring a doctor's note within a timely manner.

During the semester we will have guest speakers come to class. You will be required to submit 5 questions for each speaker to me via email on the Friday prior to the speaker's visit. Completion of this requirement will be part of your participation grade.

Assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class. No journals or papers will be accepted via email. Late assignments will drop 1 letter grade per day late.

Assignments

Journal Entries

Your first journal entry will be a 3-4 page, typed, and double-spaced description of your internship. Please discuss your job responsibilities, who you work for, what policies are important to your Congressman, and a brief historical account of your Congressman (how s/he came to office, length of time in office, competitiveness of campaigns). This entry is due in-class **February 1st**.

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. The first half will be due the week before spring break on **March 8th**. The second half will be due in place of a final exam on **May 17th** (turned in by noon in hard copy to my office). Your weekly account must be two to three-pages, typed, and double-spaced descriptions of your work experiences and how they relate to the class readings and the other student's experiences.

The journal entries will discuss policies your office is focusing on, bills your member of Congress (or organization) is 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.

Paper 1 (20%): Committees or Campaigns, 6-7 pages
Due: March 22

Choose one of the following topics:

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 subcommittees does your member sit on? Is the topic of the subcommittee something that is very important to the member's district? What are the flaws/benefits of the committee system that you have witnessed?

OR

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)?

This paper will require a bibliography and in-text citations.

By **March 8th** you will need to tell me which topic you have chosen for your paper.

Paper 2 (25%): Public Policy, 10-15 pages

Due: May 10

Proposal and outline due on April 19th

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 when you do your in-class presentation on **Monday May 10th**. 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 (which can include in-class readings) and must use MLA format for bibliography and in-text citations. Wikipedia is not considered a valid source for references. Articles from newspapers and reputable magazines, journal articles, and non-fiction books are valid sources.

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.

Presentation of Final Paper (10%)

Due: May 10th

Each student will present a ten-minute presentation of their final paper in class on the last meeting day of the semester. Power point is not required for the presentation but the use of visual aids is recommended.

Students will be graded based on their knowledge of the topic, professionalism, and ability to respond to questions from the instructor and the other students.

Leading Discussion (5%)

On the first day of class every student will select two classes during the semester where they will help lead the discussion. The week before we will decide which articles you will discuss the following class. On that day you will begin class by critiquing the reading based on your internship experiences and other readings we've discussed in class. This is an opportunity to act like a social scientist and use your experiences as a "case study" for analyzing the scholarship on Congress. You should not simply summarize the readings but should provide criticism and praise for their arguments and should bring in questions for your peers to get a better understanding of how the readings reflect their internship experiences as well. This should last at least 10 minutes.

Grades

Journal Entries – 20%
Paper 1 – 20%
Paper 2 – 25%
Class Participation – 20%
Leading Discussion – 5%
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

Format of Written Assignments

All papers, including the weekly journals, should be well written and proofread and typed. Please use Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced with 1” margins. Both papers require a bibliography and in-text citations using MLE format.

Deductions will be made for typographical, spelling and grammatical errors. Both papers 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 written assignments are due at the beginning of class time; papers received after this time will be considered late. No papers will be received via email!

Communication and Courtesy

Email is the primary source of communication for this course, please use my email address listed on the syllabus. All communication will be sent to your university email account. 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 hours (excluding weekends). Also, when replying, please include the original email discourse and please sign your full name.

Although technology is a great tool, phones, iPods, blackberries, etc. are NOT welcome during class time. Texting during class will not be tolerated.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities who are registered with Disability Support Services (301-314-7682) are encouraged to meet with the instructor early in the semester to arrange appropriate academic accommodations.

Religious Observance

Absence on a religious holiday will be considered an excused absence provided you inform me of your planned absence within the first week of the semester. For any assignment due on a religious holiday, you must make arrangements to submit the assignment before your absence.

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).

Course Reading and Assignment Schedule¹

January 25

Structure of a Congressional Office and Legislative Setting

- Discussion of syllabus and class requirements
- Government Protocol and Office Etiquette

February 1 *FIRST JOURNAL ENTRY DUE*

Congressional Structure and Development

- Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 2
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 1-3

February 8

Congressional Representation: Theory and Practice

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

February 15

Guest Speaker: Political Consultant Byron LaMasters

Congressional Elections: Candidates and Campaigns

- Hernnson, Chapters 1-3
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 4-6

February 22

Congressional Elections: Strategies, Issues, and Representation

- Hernnson, Chapters 5, 7- 8
- Jacobson "The 1994 House Elections in Perspective"
- Lee, Sizing up the Senate, Chapter 4

¹ I reserve the right to change this schedule at any time.

March 1

Political Parties: Congress, Parties, and Leadership

- Herrnson, Chapter 4
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 8-9

March 8 JOURNAL ENTRIES PART I DUE

Congressional Committees

- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapters 11-12
- Hall, “Participation and Purpose in Committee Decision Making”

March 15 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**March 22** PAPER 1 DUE

Congress and the Policy Process

- Black, Chapters 1-3
- Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process, Chapter 5
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapter 15

March 29

Interest Groups

- Herrnson, Chapter 6
- Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 13
- Hall and Deardorff, “Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy”

April 5

Networking in Congress

- Mathews, Hardball: How Politics is Played Told by One Who Knows the Game, Chapters 1-2
- Salisbury et al, “Who Works with Whom? Interest Group Alliances and Opposition”
- Black, Chapter 4-5

April 12

Special Issues in the Senate

- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapter 10
- Lee, Sizing Up the Senate, Chapter 3
- Lee, “Bicameral Institutions and Geographic Politics: Allocating Federal Funds in the House and Senate”

April 19 FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL AND OUTLINE DUE

Other Actors: the President and the Courts

- Davidson and Oleszek, Congress and Its Members, Chapter 10, 12
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapter 13, 16

April 26

Influences on Public Policy in Congress

- Hernnson, Chapter 10
- Black, Chapters, 6-9
- Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process, Chapter 6

May 3 RESEARCH DAY – NO CLASS

May 10 FINAL PAPER DUE

- In-class paper presentations
- Dodd and Oppenheimer, Chapter 18

May 17 JOURNAL ENTRIES PART II DUE at NOON