

Brigham Young University
Political Science 399r, Washington Seminar Internship
Spring/Summer 2009

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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: 30%
- Personal Professional Development: 10%
- Organization Analysis and Critique 25%
- Research Paper (15-18 Pages) 35%

Grade Breakdown for Six Credit Hours of 399R:

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

Grade Breakdown for Three Credit Hours of 399R:

- Supervisor Evaluation: 30%
- Personal Professional Development: 20%
- Organization Analysis and Critique 50%

A weighted average will be computed and grades assigned using the same scale used in 391.

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.

1. Research Proposal (6 and 9 credit hour students only). Due **May 29th**. Submit a research proposal for your final research project. The length of this will vary, but 2-5 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...). 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.

2. Personal Professional Development Paper. **Due June 12th**. 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.
3. Organizational Analysis and Critique. **Due July 24th**. Systematically analyze the nature of your internship organization. Write 4-6 pages that includes at least the following:
 - The official purposes of the organization as described in its mission statement. A discussion of organizational achievements and future goals.
 - The historical origins of the organization.
 - Funding sources
 - Personnel size and qualifications,
 - The organizational structure of the agency itself and where it fits into a broader organization (if at all).
 - At least half of the paper should be an analysis of the organization's performance in relation to its mission, historical origins, funding, and goals. 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.
4. Final Research paper. **Due no later than August 22nd**. (6 and 9 credit hour students only). 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.