

POLS 490-Political Science Internship Syllabus

Internship Coordinator: Professor April Clark

Office: Zulauf 402

Office Hours: TBD or by appointment only

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Course Overview

The Northern Illinois University (NIU) Political Science internship program is designed to allow you to test your skills and to apply what you have learned in the classroom, while earning academic credit. Internships provide on-the-job training, let you get a taste of the field in which you think you want to invest your working years, and provide you an opportunity to network.

Course Learning Objectives

Through this course you will be exposed to possible careers in political science and you will cultivate your ability to apply academic knowledge. In addition, the internship should ease your eventual transition into employment – by developing invaluable professional contacts, interpersonal skills, and on-the-job experience. The internship course also provides an opportunity for students to further develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, research and writing skills; skills that we believe to be critical to academic success, personal growth, and career readiness. In short, at the end of the semester you should have a better idea of how you might translate your scholarly training into a profession.

Course Eligibility

To earn academic credit for an undergraduate internship in Political Science you must have at least a 2.5 grade point average. You can earn up to six units of academic credit by interning at two different internship sites.

Students are expected to complete 130 hours work on-site for three units academic credit. If the internship is completed during the fall or spring semester, you will average about 10 hours per week for three units credit. If the internship is completed during the summer, weekly on-site work hours will need to be higher (about 17 hours per week if your internship runs the entire duration of the summer semester) than during the fall or spring semesters in order to achieve the minimum number of hours required to earn academic credit. Since the duration of internships vary during the summer, you will need to do the math to make sure you are working sufficient hours to earn academic credit for your internship.

Course Requirements

Course requirements include enrollment forms, internship hours, final research paper/project, journal, exit evaluation and program evaluation.

On-site work

(50 points)

When you are working on-site, it is important for you to work well with your supervisor and complete all assigned tasks in a professional manner. Your internship placement provides an excellent opportunity for you to see how your organization functions, as well as its “place” in the larger governmental and political world. Near the end of your internship the supervisor within the organization you are working for will be contacted and asked whether your performance was satisfactory. If they reply in the affirmative you will have received the full 50 points for this portion of the grade. If their response is qualified, in any manner, the internship coordinator has the right to assign lesser points, using professional judgment.

Research Paper

(30 points)

Students will be expected to complete an academic research paper that explores, in some depth, a topic relating to your internship experience. The paper, at minimum, will provide an academic literature review and in this instance appropriate references to academic sources that provide the basis for the paper. On other occasions students may be afforded the opportunity to collect data on a relevant academic research question while performing their internship duties. In this event, a student’s paper might look somewhat different than a basic literature review. In all instances, the research paper should be 8-12 double spaced pages. It is important that the topic be sufficiently narrow so that it will be possible to explore the topic in a meaningful way. If the paper is a literature review there should be at least ten (10) references to academic literature in order to receive full credit. Moreover, the paper topic must be proposed and accepted as appropriate by the deadlines set by the internship coordinator on the Blackboard Course Website. There will be a point deduction for failing to meet these deadlines (please see the grading rubric at the end of this syllabus for more details). The research paper is due on the date established by the internship coordinator, posted to the blackboard discussion board area created for that purpose.

Journal

(10 points)

The journal is reflective in nature; this means that the journal provides you with an opportunity to reflect on how your work connects with the academic political science background that you bring to the job. There should be a journal entry for each week that you work. The journal is not technically a diary, where you simply list your activities for a particular day. Instead, your entries should try and draw connections between your activities in the workplace and political science. Journal entries should be approximately 250 to 500 words in length. It is important, just as you present yourself professionally while on the job, that you also present yourself professionally when you are reflecting on that experience. Among other things, this means that journal entries should avoid grammatical and/or typographical errors. Journal entries should be posted weekly to the blackboard discussion board area created for that purpose by replying to the weekly date thread by **Sunday** of each week.

Student Assessment Form

(10 points)

At the end of your internship, we ask you to assess the experience by completing an online survey form. To earn the points, each student will receive a link to the survey that must be completed by the end of the semester. Specific due date for the completed assessment form will be provided with the survey link.

The internship will be graded on a total point system and there will be a possible 100 points for the class.

Course Grading (100 possible points in class):

The breakdown of grading for each piece of work will be as follows:

On-site work	50 pts.
Research Paper	30 pts.
Journal	10 pts.
Student Assessment Form	10 pts.

Course Grades will be distributed as follows:

Final Overall Percentage	Final Letter Grade
90-100%	A*
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

*Final course grades will be submitted in compliance with NIU's plus/minus (+/-) grading system.

Grading Rubrics for Written Work

Research Paper:

Submitted on time and appropriate length (0 - - - - - 15 pts.) _____

Topic is approved by professor (0 - - - - - 5 pts.) _____

Literature review/data collection is comprehensive (0 - - - - 5 pts.) _____

Grammar is good (minus 1 for each set of 3 errors) (0 - - - - - 5 pts.) _____

Journal:

Submitted on time and appropriate length (0- - - - - 5 pts.) _____

Presentation/Grammar is good (-1 for each set of 3 errors) (0 - - - - 5 pts.) _____

Student Assessment Forms:

Submitted on time (0 or 10 pts.) _____