



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

The Fund for American Studies

Public Policy and International Affairs Seminar

Arlington Campus

General Information

Course: Public Policy Seminar, ECON 496-1

Room: Founders Hall, Room TBD

Dates: June 12-July 24, 2019

Time: 6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Instructor: Professor Karen M. Czarnecki

Email: Primary: kczarnecki@mercatus.gmu.edu; Secondary: kmc3inva@yahoo.com

Phone: 703/993-9673

Office hours: By Appointment; before or after class works well.

Required Texts:

How Washington Really Works, by Charles Peters

Saving Congress from Itself, by James L. Buckley (e-book is fine)

Supplemental Materials:

- The instructor regularly supplements textbook readings with journal articles, book chapters, essays, and other material. It is the student's responsibility to consult Blackboard weekly for updated materials for each class.

Course Goals:

- To further an understanding of how Washington, DC works
- To examine how the internships offer practical experience for various public policy careers
- To understand the complex nature and challenges of public policy careers
- To develop writing and presentation skills applicable to careers in public policy
- To highlight current events in the context of internship experiences

Format:

- Subject matter lectures
- Readings, including:
 - *How Washington Works* (Peters), and *Saving Congress from Itself* (Buckley)
 - Additional chapters/essays/articles/reading material as assigned
- Active discussion regarding class topics, internships, assigned readings
- Student group presentations illustrating class work, assigned readings, and research on various public policy issues
- Typed homework assignments; one short essay
- Public Policy Guest Speakers

Expectations:

- The instructor and students will act with the highest level of professional ethics, demonstrate a genuine interest in the subject matter at hand, and come to every class fully prepared to engage in the learning process.
- Students will complete all of the readings in advance of each class, and come to class ready to discuss their own experiences and insights regarding the lessons at hand.
- Students will adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code. Copying, cheating, or plagiarism will not be tolerated.
- Students will attend all class sessions and participate in class discussions. Students who are unable to attend any particular class must, to the fullest extent practicable, inform the instructor of their pending absence in advance. The instructor will work to accommodate every student's situation, where appropriate, including unexpected family or personal challenges and unanticipated events (e.g. a death in the family, severe illness, etc.).
- Unless otherwise agreed upon by the instructor, students will submit all their assignments on time, at the beginning of each class. Assignments are not to be submitted via email. With rare exception, late assignments will be marked down a minimum of one full letter grade. Students are expected to proofread their written products for typos and grammatical errors, which if left unchecked, will result in a lower grade.
- The instructor will maintain an open-door policy and be available to field any questions, concerns, comments, etc. within a reasonable timeframe.
- Please note that in order to accommodate speaker schedules, some changes in class content may occur. The professors or TFAS staff will send out a note to students if there is a change in schedule.

Grading:

▪ Class Attendance & Participation, including:	25%
○ Knowledge of readings	
○ Attendance at Scheduled Site Briefings	
○ Class Participation	
▪ Interview Summary (2 pages)	10%
▪ Group Presentation (15-20 minute presentation, plus Q & A)	15%
▪ Chapter Outline	5%
▪ Think Tank Essay	5%
▪ Policy Persuasion Paper	20%
▪ Internship Grade	20%

SYLLABUS

For first class, come **prepared** to discuss your view of the role of government in policy matters. Be prepared to give specific examples of your position/thoughts. There are several articles posted on Blackboard under "Course Content" that are helpful to review before first class.

June 12

Course Overview

- Introduction to Subject matter
- Class Introductions and brief descriptions of Internships
- Discussion of the Role of Government
- Group Presentation Topics Assigned

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Write an Internship Interview Summary (See guidelines at the end of syllabus)

- Read *How Washington Works*, Chapter 7 (Congress)
- Read Peters chapter on Congress
- Read Buckley, *Saving Congress From Itself*: Chapter 2 (Grants-In-Aid Cornucopia) and Chapter 3 (Program Costs)
- Read *The Waxman Report*, Chapter 8 (*Fraud, Waste and Abuse*) by Henry Waxman
- Optional: Review Ethics information posted

June 19 The Congress

- Hand in Hard Copy of “Internship Interview Summary” at start of class
- General Discussion on How Congress Works, Congress’ Relationship with other Branches, Oversight
- Group Presentation on Congress

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Read Peters, *How Washington Works*, Chapter 2 (Lobbies)
- Read Vance, chapter posted from *The Influence Game*
- Read Abramoff, 2 chapters posted from *Capitol Punishment*

June 26 Lobbying

- Presentations from Lobbying Student Group
- General Discussion on How Lobbying Affects Policy Development, Lobbying Tactics/Strategy
- Guest Speaker: TBD

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Read Peters, Chapters 3 (Bureaucracy) and 6 (Regulators)
- Under Regulation, read “The Problems with Regulation;” Getting More Bang for the Regulatory Buck;” and “Look Before You Leap: A Key Principle for Regulation”
- Optional: Under Bureaucracy, read Why the Bureaucracy Fails (CATO)

July 1 Regulation/Bureaucracy (Note class is on Monday)

- Presentation from Bureaucracy/Regulator Group
- Discussion of Agencies and Regulation generally

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Read 3 assigned chapters on trade policy
- View 2 short CSIS videos posted on Subsidies and Trade and a 21st Century Trade War

July 10 Trade Policy (Class at George Washington University; 4-6 pm)

- General discussion of trade policy; different audiences affected by government decision making; trade wars

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read “Devaluing the Think Tank” in *National Affairs* by Tevi Troy
- Read Chapter 4, “Competing in the Marketplace of Ideas: The Strategies of Think Tanks,” from *Do Think Tanks Matter?*
- Prepare think tank essay assignment-see guidelines at end of syllabus

July 17 **In lieu of class, please watch 1 of 4 posted think tank videos (see Blackboard for links) for in-class discussion on July 24. Options include:**

- 1 Health Risks and Policy Problems of Cannabis Legalization
- 2 Theft of a Decade: How Baby Boomers Stole the Millennials’ Economic Future
- 3 Resurgent American Nationalism: Conservatism, foreign Policy, and Beyond
- 4 Medicare’s Perilous Fiscal Failure: the 2019 Trustees Report

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read Chapter 8 (White House) and “A Way Out”
- Watch *The Hill*’s video on Obama Presidency: <http://thehill.com/video/events/273277-inside-obamas-white-house> (Approx length 1.5 hours)
- Prepare Policy Persuasion Paper (instructions at end of syllabus)

July 24 **The White House**

- Hand in Think Tank Assignment and Policy Persuasion Paper
 - Discuss Effectiveness of Think Tank events from previous week
 - Presentation from White House Group Project
 - General Discussion on White House Operations, How Administrations Control the Agenda
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PAPER/PROJECT GUIDELINES

INTERNSHIP INTERVIEW SUMMARY:

Write an **INTERNSHIP INTERVIEW SUMMARY** based on meeting with a Senior Manager/Supervisor in the organization in which you intern and address the following questions:

- 1 What is the organization’s mission?
- 2 What are the sources of funds for the organization?
- 3 What are the immediate and long range goals of the organization?
- 4 What is the audience they seek to influence?
- 5 What is the biggest challenge/concern facing the organization?
- 6 How is the organization addressing this challenge, if at all?

GUIDELINES FOR INTERNSHIP SUMMARY

- 2 pages maximum
- Use proper grammar and punctuation
- Put in “**Memo Format.**”

- Do not use Question & Answer format – use paragraphs, full sentences, and develop each question thoroughly.
- Do not provide one word or very short answers. Give examples if possible, spell out the details (especially on the budget); develop your thoughts. Use comparisons with similar or competing organizations if necessary.
- The way to approach this memo: if your boss received an invitation from an organization with which he/she is not familiar, what information would need to be included in this memo for your boss to make a well-informed decision whether or not to accept the invitation?

GROUP PROJECT GUIDELINES:

- You will be assigned to a group project/topic in the first class and your team will make a presentation on the topic to the class. Please refer to the syllabus for date of the scheduled presentation.
- The designated team lead will be responsible for scheduling team meetings to work on the project.
- Each presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length.
- Each group can decide the format and final content of the presentations, but should utilize a minimum of 3 credible sources for the project. Various viewpoints for source material is strongly encouraged.
- Each group will be given a different fact pattern and will have to ensure that they answer the questions in the fact pattern.
- After each presentation, there will be a brief Q and A session from the audience.
- Practice your presentations ahead of time!

THINK TANK ASSIGNMENT:

Write a One-Page Summary (essay) in memo format of an educational policy paper from any national think tank on any policy issue of interest to you or one about which you would like to learn more. Your short memo should include whether you believe the paper is informative, well rounded, and persuasive. Please tell me why you believe this or not. Also, include the target audience for whom the paper is written.

The selected paper should be no more than 5-15 pages in length and must be handed in with assignment. Please staple the 2 together or write your name at the top of the policy paper.

Examples of national non-profit think tanks include, but are not limited to:

The Brookings Institute
 Urban Institute
 The Heritage Foundation
 CATO Institute
 Progressive Policy Institute
 Competitive Enterprise Institute
 American Enterprise Institute
 Peterson Institute for International Economics
 Council on Foreign Relations
 Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
 Bipartisan Policy Center
 Atlantic Council
 New America Foundation
 Freedom House
 Open Society Foundation
 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 Center for Strategic and International Studies
 Center for American Progress
 Mercatus Center at George Mason University

CHAPTER OUTLINE:

Each class member will be assigned one of the chapters from the homework assignments and asked to highlight the main points/takeaways from the reading. The assignment will be due on the day the topic is discussed in class. Page length is limited to one page. See syllabus topics for your due date.

POLICY PERSUASION PAPER:

- Pick a current public policy issues affecting your organization.
- Write a 4-6 page paper discussing both sides of the issue, but telling me which is the better method to solve that policy issue.
- Please use no less than 3 outside sources, with citations at the end.
- Appropriate references to any of our class materials or lectures is highly recommended, but they have to make sense.
- Due date is on the last day or class, unless an extension of one week is requested.