

Being prepared for the jobs of the future requires being equipped to perform a series of non-routine tasks that require social intelligence, complex critical thinking, and creative problem solving.

– John Oliver

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students the opportunity to gain practical experience in government and politics, broadly conceived. Accordingly, students may work as interns with politicians, lawyers, judges, government, or law enforcement agencies, city and county planning departments, advocates and activists, or other politically related entities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class meets semi-weekly. In addition to in-class participation and assignments, each student must complete the following internship requirements outside of the classroom:

1. Work a minimum of 100 hours as an intern in a position approved by a member of the Political Science department.
2. Have a brief email sent by the internship supervisor to the POLS internship coordinator at the outset confirming the appointment and describing the work likely to be assigned to the student.
3. Have a letter or email sent to the POLS Internship Coordinator at the conclusion of the internship by his or her employer that evaluates the work performance of the student over the course of the internship and verifies the number of hours worked.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Department of Political Science places a premium on experiential learning, especially through student internships. The goal of this course is to provide students an opportunity to apply their coursework to the “real world”, to develop further their professional skills in an area of potential career interest, gain expertise in policy analysis, and begin developing a professional network for after they graduate.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Grades for this course will be based on the following:

- Policy memo (due Final Draft 12/10) (25%)
- Reflective essay (due 12/10) (25%)
- Informational interview (due 12/10) 10%
- Weekly journal (due 12/10) (25%)
- Participation (10%)

In grading written work, I evaluate only the words on the page before me. Written assignments should be clearly written, concise, and free from grammatical errors.

If you have questions about why you received a grade, I am happy to discuss it. However, questions about grades must wait at least 24-hours. If after this “cooling off period” you would like to contest a grade, I require a written request, outlining why you believe the grade you received was in error. Remember that I am not out to get you, and am more likely than not to give credit if it seems questionable.

Final grades will be determined according to the following percentages:

A = >93%	B- = 80%-82.9%	D+ = 67%-69.9%
A- = 90%-92.9%	C+ = 77%-79.9%	D = 63%-66.9%
B+ = 87%-89.9%	C = 73%-76.9%	F = <63%
B = 83%-86.9%	C- = 70%-72.9%	

POLICY MEMO

Over the course of the semester you will write a policy memo (or equally substantive alternative suitable for your internship). This memo will analyze and recommend a policy solution to a problem or issue related to the work being done at the student’s place of internship.

A policy memo is a developed summary, not a research paper. And while the memo itself is relatively short (5-6 pages), it will nevertheless require a substantial amount of work to do well. Within the first few weeks of the internship, students should meet with their supervisor and let them know this class requires a writing or research component. The intern should ask if any of the staff have issues for which they could benefit from additional research. Specific projects may be developed with supervisors on the job but must be approved by the instructor. Examples of suitable projects include policy analyses of potential legislation, program or policy evaluations, or packets to support proposed or existing legislation or voter initiatives.

Using the following general framework for your report, your memo should accomplish the following:

1. Define a problem

What is and is not a problem is not the same for everyone, and even when there is agreement that something is a problem, there will often be disagreement on whether or not a policy solution is appropriate, and not to mention certain disagreement about which policy solution is best. You will need to clearly identify a problem and present it in a way that justifies a policy response. If you cannot make a clear case that there is a problem that needs solving, everything else you do is pointless.

2. Assemble some evidence

Data can be turned into *information* that can in turn be *evidence* that has some bearing on your problem. You will need to gather evidence to assess the nature and extent of the problem you are trying to define, assess the specific features of the concrete policy situation you are studying (e.g. agency workloads, responsibilities, budgets, existing laws, attitudes), and to assess policies others have tried (which were considered successful) in similar situations. Read about the problem! Read the academic journals publishing research on the

problem. How have other state or local agencies dealt with similar problems? See what is known, what has worked, what was once thought to work but then found to not work.

3. Construct the alternatives

What are the policy options? Don't be afraid to be creative, but you also want to be efficient. Ultimately, you will decide between two or three principal policy alternatives. Discuss options with your internship supervisor!

4. Generate criteria for evaluating options

On what basis should we choose between alternatives? Distinguish the analytic from the evaluative. While the first is logical (if this happens, this other thing happens), the second is about whether what is happening is good or bad.

You need to be **clear** about your criteria; categorize them appropriately where possible. That is, is this something to be maximized or minimized, is it a constraining or a more-is-better value? Group your criteria into positives (benefits) and negatives (costs, bad things). Note that evaluative criteria are not used to judge the alternatives themselves, but to judge outcomes.

5. Analyze each option according to your criteria

What are the pros and cons? What is feasible? What are the projected outcomes of each? Projecting means predicting the future. This is a tricky proposition! Be realistic. Policies are real. The people involved are real. Their lives are really going to be affected. Don't project what you would like to happen; try to think what is likely to happen.

6. Decide!

Pretend you are the decision maker. What do you recommend? If you cannot convince yourself of the plausibility of some course of action, how can you convince someone else?

Consider the \$20 bill test: Two friends are walking down the street. One picks something up, "Hey a \$20 bill". The other, an economist, says, "Can't be, someone else would have picked it up already¹."

7. Tell your story

Distill your conclusions succinctly in a concluding section. Pass the Grandma test: You have one minute to explain to your grandma why your policy can solve problem X in simple, down-to-earth language. Keep it short.

8. Finally, remember that the path is not straight

Despite its linear appearance, Bardach does not offer a cookie cutter approach to problem solving. Often you will need to retrace your steps on the path (e.g. reviewing, reconsidering, innovating, changing your mind.) The path is more of a checklist of things you need to consider (even if only to consider if you need to consider them).

Your final memo should be 5-6 pages (of text) in length, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and should be professional in appearance and organization. This means use appropriate citations, headers, references, tables, figures, etc...

¹ Another way of thinking of this is, if your idea is so great, how come it isn't already happening?

Papers **MUST** include a single-page executive summary. In the real world, this is all most people will read and should include all major points from your analysis as well as your recommendation.

PEER REVIEW

The most important thing to remember is that writing is fundamentally a form of communication between real people. Peer-review has two goals. The first is to help the writer to effectively communicate their research, their question, answer, and their evidence. The second goal of peer-review is to help the reviewer develop critical reading skills. Reading peers' work with a "critical eye" can help you to begin to apply that "eye" to your own work. Note that these are complementary. That is, if you read with a critical and unsparing eye you are more likely to give feedback that improves the paper, and by doing this you will be practicing a skill that will improve your writing.

Working in groups, you will read each other's drafts and provide written feedback. Reviewers should comment on the following:

1. The policy problem
 - a. What is it? Is it clearly defined? Does it seem important? Do they present evidence of the problem? Is their evidence convincing? How could it be more convincingly presented?
 - b. Do they discuss existing research on the problem? Do they discuss options others have tried to solve the problem? What's missing?
2. Alternatives/Criteria
 - a. Do they clearly present an appropriate and manageable number of policy alternatives? Do they include the option of "do nothing"?
 - b. Do they present clear and appropriate criteria for evaluating outcomes under different policy alternatives? Is there something missing?
3. Analysis/Decision
 - a. Do they make realistic projections about the likely outcomes under the different policy alternatives? Are they missing something?
 - b. Do they make a clear policy recommendation? Is it persuasive? What could make it more persuasive?
4. Conclusion/Story
 - a. Do they have a clear and convincing story? Does it pass the Grandma test?
5. Executive Summary
 - a. Do they have one? Is it a well-written and concise distillation of the major points from their memo, including a persuasively argued and clear policy recommendation? What could be done to improve it?
6. Organization
 - a. Is the argument of the paper organized effectively? Are there places that are confusing? Are there any places where the paper goes off on an unnecessary tangent or addresses irrelevant material?
7. Paragraphing
 - a. Thinking about the paragraphs. Are the paragraphs cohesive – i.e. do they focus on/develop one idea? Are any paragraphs too long or too short for easy reading? Are there effective transitions between paragraphs?
8. Writing

- a. Is the writing style clear and concise – that is does it avoid unnecessarily long sentences and minimize the use of jargon? Do sentences flow into one another?
9. What is the single most important thing they can do to improve their paper?

We will make time in class for groups to meet and give feedback face-to-face. Talking face-to-face can help writers articulate what they are trying to say in their papers and provide a place for real readers to tell writers what they're hearing and what isn't coming across clearly.

Your review should be in the form of a typed memo (it is fine if you want to mark up their paper as well, but you **MUST** submit your peer reviews as separate documents). Your review will be graded on its thoroughness, even-handedness, and helpfulness. Peer review will constitute 5% of the overall course grade.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Over the course of the semester, students will write an 8-10-page reflective paper examining some of the lessons learned during the internship about the process and practice of politics. Papers should address the following questions:

1. What is the mission of the organization, agency, or person for whom you interned? How does this organization, agency, or person endeavor to fulfill this mission? How do politics factor in? Please be specific.
2. What attracted the people with whom you worked to their jobs? Do they find their work fulfilling? Why or why not?
3. What obstacles or constraints limit the capacity of this organization, agency, or person to meet its goals?
4. What did you learn about the process and practice of politics? How can you connect these lessons to your other coursework at Linfield?
5. What did you learn about your own abilities, interests, and commitments to the process and practice of politics?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

As part of this course, you are required to conduct an Informational Interview, which is just what it sounds like, an interview designed to produce information. An informational interview involves talking with people who are currently working in the field to gain a better understanding of an occupation or industry -- and to build a network of contacts in that field.

It is **NOT** a job interview, or even close. But it is one of the **MOST** effective form of networking there is.

Some good reasons to conduct informational interviews:

- to explore careers and clarify your career goal
- to expand your professional network
- to build confidence for your job interviews
- to access the most up-to-date career information
- to identify your professional strengths and weaknesses

- to obtain critical feedback on your resume/job-search goals

You gain invaluable interviewing experience and you gain visibility. In short, informational interviewing prepares you for what's in store and allows you the opportunity to network with others in your field of interest.

How do you identify people to interview?

Start with lists of people you already know: friends, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, professors, etc. Review your online social networks -- Facebook friends, LinkedIn contacts, and Twitter followers. Professional organizations, Chambers of Commerce, the yellow pages from the phone book, professional organization directories, and public speakers are also good resources.

You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title. **There's no one in the world you can't try contacting.** People generally like to help students out with job information, and who doesn't like talking about themselves?

NOTE: The Political Science Department also keeps a list of Alumni who have expressed their openness to being contacted by current students. This list should be available soon. If you would like to know more, please contact the Instructor.

Do not waste their time

1. Be prepared:
 - a. Research the organization, person you'll be speaking with, product produced by the organization, etc.
 - i. If your contact is an alumnus/alumna, check to see if they have any biographical information available from the department they majored in, Google him/her -- and try venues such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
 - b. The more you know, the better you'll be able to formulate questions pertaining to the organization and job, the more confident you will feel about your ability to communicate effectively, and the better impression you will leave.
2. Respect their time:
 - a. Focus on the key information you need.
 - b. Ask only those questions that are appropriate and important to you.
 - c. Acknowledging that the information the interviewee is giving you is important.
3. Be flexible:
 - a. People who grant informational interviews are generally willing to share 20-30 minutes of their time to explain their expertise in their field.
 - b. Remember to be flexible in your scheduling, as these volunteer interviewees may have prior commitments.
 - c. Sometimes the person will want to talk over the phone, but often he or she will invite you to his or her workplace. When you can, choose that the interview be at their workplace because you'll learn more and make a stronger connection with the person.

Never ask for a job at an informational interview

Employers (including alumni) will grant informational interviews when they firmly trust that you will not hit them up for a job. The minute you begin trying to get a job, they will feel misled and think less of you.

Build your network

You have spent 20-30 minutes with this person, asking questions, getting advice and sharing a little about yourself. Thus begins your contact network. The person has taken time to share with you; in other words, he or she has invested time in you. Most people like their investments to pay off. Most people will feel good about your staying in contact with them.

The interviewee may not have a job for you but may know of other employers or people to which you may be referred. Ask for your contact's business card and exchange one of your own, if you have one.

Ask for referrals at the informational interview

People who are in the same kind of business usually know their competition.

Before leaving the informational interview, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact's name when contacting these new contacts.

What you need to turn in

You should submit a short write up detailing:

- Who you interviewed (Name, title, educational background, alumnus?)
- Logistical details surrounding your meeting (when, where, etc...)
- What you hoped to learn going in
- A few interesting things you learned (particularly those that surprised you)
- What you learned that will help your next Informational Interview more productive (note that you should plan on doing a number of these over the next few years, as you begin your career)

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Over the course of your internship you should keep a weekly journal detailing both work conducted and thoughtful impressions regarding the significance and meaning of the work. Plan to write at least two times a week (about one single spaced page per entry). Your entries should consist of two types, in roughly equal proportions: 1) observations from or reflections on your internship experiences, and 2) analysis of the ways in which aspects of the broader political world relate to your internship work and vice versa. In your analysis-based entries, you should draw on your internship experiences, the political role and mission of your place of internship, and what you have learned through your political science coursework so far, feeling free to incorporate contemporary political events where applicable. For each entry, you should record the date and which type of reflection it is (internship or analysis). **For the first two times that you work at your place of internship, your journal entries related to your internship should be mainly observation.** That is, focus on describing what you see and hear. Try to resist making value judgments, or reflecting on what you see. What do people in that setting do? Who is in the setting? What does it look like? Where is it located? What activities are you assigned to do? What surprises you? I would like you to get down as many details as possible in these early entries. They will serve as a benchmark for you to reflect upon later in the semester, especially when writing your reflective essay.

You should write your journal entries in Blackboard. On three dates during the semester, I will grade your entries. You are free to reflect on any aspect of the experience that you encounter while interning at your organization. Feel free to include newspaper articles, photographs, flyers, or other materials relevant to your organization, and to be creative. I do not expect these journals entries to be polished essays, but I do not want them to be purely stream-of-consciousness writing either. Writing in your journal will be most valuable if you use consistently to record, reflect upon, and analyze specific issues and experiences. I will be reviewing your journal entries three times during the semester.

I will grade the journals as follows:

A: 2+ journal entries (of roughly one page in length each) per week, good balance between reflecting on your internship experiences and analysis, and excellent analytical integration of your internship experience into your broader political science education and/or current events.

B: 2 journal entries per week (of roughly one page in length each) per week, adequate balance between reflecting on internship experiences and analysis, room for improvement with respect to integrating your internship experience into your broader political science education and/or current events.

C: 1-2 journal entries per week, adequate balance between reflecting on internship experiences and analysis, room for improvement with respect to integrating your internship experience into your broader political science education and/or current events.

D: 1-2 journal entries per week, lack of balance between reflecting on internship experiences and analysis, room for improvement with respect to integrating your internship experience into your broader political science education and/or current events.

PARTICIPATION

Classes will consist of a mixture of seminar-style discussions and hands-on workshops; your active participation is absolutely vital!

Your participation grade will be determined by the quality of participation weighted by volume of participation, as well as by your completion of several assignments over the course of the semester.

BOOKS AND READINGS

This book is **recommended but not required**, and we will cover the material in class. Should you wish, you may purchase a copy of the book as a reference. It is available on Amazon for \$20:

Bardach, Eugene. 2008. *A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. CQ Press.

All other required readings will be made available electronically.

CONTACTING ME

I am always happy to answer any and all questions you may have. If you have a short and simple question, please email it to me. For more complicated inquiries I would be happy to schedule a Zoom meeting.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations please contact Jeff Larson, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request accommodation for your disability. The timeliness of your request will allow LSS to promptly arrange the details of your support. LSS is located in Melrose Hall 020 (503-883-2562), or LSS@linfield.edu. We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations.

COVID-19 Consideration

Students who are currently sick or who are on quarantine will communicate to Jeff Larson, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request temporary accommodation for their individual situation. LSS is located in Melrose Hall 020 (503-883-2562) or LSS@linfield.edu. Once notified by LSS for the need of accommodation, the instructor will determine the most appropriate way to stay current with class material and any missed work.

All Linfield University faculty, staff and students are required to adhere to the temporary policies including face coverings, physical distancing and others linked [on the Environmental Health and Safety site](#).

COVID-19: In Case of Local Outbreak:

In the event of disruption of normal classroom activities due to a coronavirus outbreak, information pertaining to the completion of this course will be communicated to all students. It is possible that the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the course syllabus by the instructor.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

I take a VERY dim view of cheating and have some simple advice for those of you who may be tempted to rely on short-cuts and cheat your way through this class: don't do it.

I fully adhere to the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College Course Catalog. If I catch you cheating, you will receive an F for the course, and I will see to it that your misconduct is duly noted in your academic record.

COURSE SCHEDULE²

Week 2, Jan 29

- Course overview
- Student Roundtable
 - What would you like to get out of your internship?
 - What is your plan to achieve this?

Week 3, Feb 5: NO CLASS

Week 4, Feb 12

- Bardach (Part I)
 - Instructor presentation
 - Discussion
- Student Roundtable
 - What are you doing in your internship?
 - What are examples of daily activities?
 - What challenges have you encountered?
 - How have you dealt with them?

Week 5, Feb 19

- Bardach (Part II and III)
 - Instructor presentation
 - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

*****Journal DUE*****

Week 6, Feb 26: NO CLASS

- **DUE!** One-page policy analysis proposal

Week 7, Mar 5: NO CLASS

Week 8, Mar 12: NO CLASS

Week 9, Mar 19: NO CLASS

- **DUE!** 1st Draft of Policy Analysis

*****Journal DUE*****

Week 10, Mar 26:

- **DUE!** Written peer-group feedback on Policy Analysis Draft
- Peer-Review meetings
- Student Roundtable

² Please note that this schedule is intended to be a guideline and that I reserve the right to make changes as needed. I do appreciate your flexibility.

Week 11, Apr 2: NO CLASS

Week 12, Apr 9: NO CLASS

- **DUE!** Final Draft of Policy Analysis

Week 13, Apr 16:

- **DUE!** Reflective Essay and Weekly journal
- **DUE!** Informational Interview write-up
- Semester wrap-up
- Student roundtable
 - Did your internship experience go according to plan?
 - What did you learn?