Political Science 427 - Legislative Internship  
Spring 2013 Syllabus

Instructor: Dimitri Kelly  
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Monday 4:00-5:50pm Ingraham 113  
Office Hours: 401 North Hall, Tues 2:00-4:00pm (or by appointment)

Overview

Welcome! This course brings together academia, your internship, and your professional future. Our goal is to develop your professional skill set, gain expertise in policy analysis, and better understand the political and policy job market.

Unlike the typical political science course, you will be an integral part of teaching the curriculum. With the exception of early classes devoted to policy analysis and careers in politics, pairs of students will deliver interactive workshops on topics ranging from legislative research to campaigns and fundraising. Groups will research topics and engage the class through presentations, discussions, and interactive projects. Following student presentations, the instructor will add his two cents and present additional relevant research. The instructor is also available to assist in developing your presentations.

In addition, the final portion of each class offers a roundtable discussion during which students can submit items for the agenda. If you have a problem or opportunity at work, bring it to the class. If you are going to make a presentation to legislative staff, why not try it out on us first? This class is yours. Simply email the instructor by 7:00 pm each Sunday night and a portion of the agenda will be set-aside for you.

The course also includes a policy analysis paper (or equally substantive alternative suitable for your internship), peer-review groups, and one-on-one meetings to support your individual needs.

Readings
This course has one required textbook. More specialized readings will be distributed by the instructor and your fellow students.

Course Schedule

January 28
- Course overview
- Presentation Signup
- Peer Review questionnaire
- D.C. internship opportunities with Dave Nelson

February 4
- Bardach (Part I)
  - **DUE!** One-page summary of Bardach, Part I (pgs 1-70)
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Quiz
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

February 11
- Bardach (Part II and III)
  - **DUE!** One-page summary of Bardach, Part II (pgs 79-106)
  - **DUE!** One-page summary of Bardach, Part III (pgs 109-123)
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Quiz
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

February 18
- **DUE!** One-page policy analysis proposal
- Secrets to Successful Careers in the 21st Century
  - Guest Speaker
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

February 25
- Job Applications Materials: Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviews
  - Guest Speaker
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

March 4
- State Legislative Process (Compared to US Congress)
  - Student Presentation
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable
- Signup for individual meetings
March 11
- **DUE!** 1st Draft of Policy Analysis
- Individual Meetings

March 18
- **DUE!** Written peer-group feedback on Policy Analysis Draft
- Peer-Review group meetings
- Student Roundtable

March 25
- Spring Break

April 1
- Legislative Research
  - Student Presentation
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

April 8
- Campaign Strategy and Fundraising
  - Student Presentation
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

April 15
- Correspondent Letters and Constituent services
  - Student Presentation
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable

April 22
- Press Release and Press Events
  - Student Presentation
  - Instructor Presentation
  - Discussion
- Student Roundtable
April 29
• Interest Groups and Lobbying
  o Student Presentation
  o Instructor Presentation
  o Discussion
• Student Roundtable

May 6
• **DUE!** Final Draft Policy Draft Analysis
• Final Class
  o Activity to be Announced

**Classroom Policies**

**Attendance policy:** Class attendance is required. Absences will seriously reduce grades for class participation.

**Tardiness:** Attend class on time. Tardiness will also reduce grades for participation. Late papers and response papers will not be accepted.

**Cheating and plagiarism:** Absolutely zero tolerance. Violations will result in guaranteed failure on the assignment and possible failure in the course. If you have questions about appropriate citations, please ask.

**Phones:** This is just common courtesy. All cell phones must be turned off or put on silent during class. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in personal embarrassment.

**Internet:** This one's easy. Unless it is part of an in-class assignment, please do not go online.

**Syllabus Changes:** The instructor and the university reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.).

**Grading Policies and Procedures**

**Summary:**
Research paper (8-10 pages) 30%
Peer Review 10%
Writing Assignments 10%
Presentation (40 min long) 30%
Participation 20%
Research Papers:
An essential strategy for success in legislative internships is to master daily administrative tasks. In order to receive greater responsibility, interns need to answer the phones, make copies, and write letters with excellence. In addition, however, interns should seek ways to demonstrate their substantive research and writing skills and develop a product that will not only benefit legislative staff but also serve as a writing sample for future jobs and graduate school applications.

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 legislative staff have issues for which could benefit additional research even if it requires substantial time outside of work hours. Specific projects should be developed with supervisors on the job but must be approved by the instructor. Examples of suitable projects include policy analyses, program or policy evaluations, or packets supporting new or existing legislation.

To support policy analysis, students should utilize Eugene Bardach’s *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. This path may need to be altered to fit the specific needs of each office. That said, the basic strategy of analyzing a problem, developing criteria, evaluating alternatives, and choosing the best option can be easily applied to a range of policy issues in any office.

A draft of the first half of the paper must be emailed to the instructor and peer reviewers by 5:00pm on March 11th.

A paper copy of the final draft is due May 6th.

Papers should be eight to twelve 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... This paper will account for 30% of the student’s grade.

Papers should also 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:**
Writing is fundamentally a form of communication between real people. The goal of peer-review is to develop critical reading skills. Reading peers’ work with a “critical eye” can help you to begin to apply that “eye” to your own work.

Working in groups of three, you will read each other’s work and provide written feedback. Reviewers should considering the following three central questions:

1) What is the writer trying to say/argue in this piece?
2) How can s/he make this argument more effective and persuasive?
3) What are potential counter-arguments and do they address them effectively?

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.

**Presentation**

**Congratulations!**

You have just been hired by Dr. Kelly’s Political Consulting, Inc. to conduct a series of workshops for legislative and campaign staff. Participants will be legislative or campaign staff in their first week of work. For the sake of this assignment, assume they have little or no prior political experience.

*What do they need to know about this topic in order to do their jobs effectively?*

Workshops should be 40 minutes in length. The first 20-minutes should be a presentation describing the fundamental issues they need to understand about Wisconsin state law and best practices in your topic. The second 20-minutes should be interactive. Presenters can facilitate a discussion about the topic or they could lead the group in an assignment designed to teach participants through hands-on activities. In either event, the full 40 minutes should be used.

Following the workshop, participants should feel comfortable working on a given topic. While they may not have all the information necessary to claim expertise, they should understand the fundamentals and know the resources they can use when they have additional questions.

Below is a list of workshop topics, along with some sample questions worth thinking about. Prepare a presentation that answers these and/or other questions you identify as potentially important.
Workshop Topics:

State Legislative Process
- How does the legislative process in Wisconsin work on paper? Does it work this way in reality?
- How does it differ from the US Congress and how are these differences meaningful?
- Be sure that in your presentation you consider the legislative role of other political actors and/or constraints (e.g. the Governor vs. the President, budgetary rules).

Legislative Research
- Where to start if your boss asks you to prepare a memo outlining the origin of a statute or research the administrative rules and state agencies responsible for implementing them?
- How do you go about finding information to explain or clarify a particular law for an unhappy or confused constituent?

Correspondent Letters and Constituent Services
- What kinds of things to state Legislators do for their constituents? Why?
- What are some best practices?
- Things to avoid?

Campaign Strategies and Fundraising
- How do you win a political campaign?
- Would your advice differ for campaigns at different levels of government (i.e. local, city, state)?
- How much money is enough?
- What are some effective fundraising strategies?

Public Opinion, Polling, and Campaigns
- How do campaigns use public opinion polls?
- How should campaigns use public opinion polls?
- What do public opinion polls tell us?
- How reliable are public opinion polls in predicting election outcomes?

Public Opinion and Governing
- How do representatives use public opinion polls?
- How should campaigns use public opinion polls?
- What do public opinion polls tell us?
- How reliable are public opinion polls in predicting election outcomes?
Press Releases and Press Events
  • What is the purpose of a press release or other press event?
  • How do you construct an effective press release or press event?
  • What are some best practices?
  • Things to avoid?

Interest groups and Lobbying
  • What are interest groups?
  • What role do they play in the legislative process?
  • What are lobbyists?
  • What role do they play in the legislative process?
  • What are some strategies for legislators dealing with lobbyists?
  • What are some strategies for effective lobbying?

Class Participation

Class participation, including attendance, constitutes 20% of your grade for the course.

As part of your participation you will complete several short writing assignments. These minor writing assignments are deceptively simple: a single, 50-word sentence summarizing the week’s reading.

As part of your participation you will also be required to meet with UW Career Coach Dave Nelson. Dave has a wealth of experience in politics and is an invaluable resource. He will let me know who has come to see him.