POLI 402  
Field Internship  
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This course provides an opportunity to do an internship in Charleston, to interact with other political science students also doing internships and to ground that internship experience in a classroom setting. The course is designed to enhance your internship experience by providing a community within which to share experiences, a set of readings that will allow you to critically assess your internship experience, and a series of writing assignments that will allow you to process and analyze not just your internship, but also larger political issues that have emerged from your internship experience. What does work mean? What are the work issues that we talk about? What difference does it make if we don’t think consciously about our relationship with work? How do our life choices impact us?

Each of you is required to work a minimum of 140 hours during the semester (10-15 hours a week). Recognizing that this is a large time commitment the class sessions are built to allow you to reflect on that time and to share strategies with your fellow classmates for time and work management. Class attendance is required and class time will be most useful when you come ready to participate. You can shape this class to be most effective for you by participating actively.

Course objectives
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to 1) conduct qualitative research in an organizational setting; 2) demonstrate an understanding of the history, organizational mission, and political environment of the internship organization, 3) reflect on your own talents and interests in light of your internship experience, and 4) critically assess an aspect of the contemporary labor market.

Course requirements

Participation (10%)  
I expect active participation in this class. Come to class ready to contribute to the general discussion with particular experiences from your internship. Feel free to e-mail me before class with any timely issues that have arisen from your internship.

Organization analysis paper (10%)  
This is an analysis of the organization in which you work. You will do so both as a participant observer (an ethnographic analysis) and as a description/analysis of the workplace norms, values, mission, hierarchy, etc. More information on this paper will be handed out by 1/16. This paper is due 2/13 in class.

Issue paper (15%)  
This allows you to put your internship experience to use in analyzing a larger political issue. This is a place for you to connect your work as a political science student
to your internship experience. Your paper will frame the connection between the issue and your internship work and draw on at least 6 scholarly sources to think through what the issue means or how others have framed and/or sought to solve the issue. More information on this paper will be handed out later in the semester. The first draft of these papers is due 3/21. You will have an opportunity to rewrite your paper after your presentation. Final drafts are due 4/18.

Presentation (10%)
Each student will give an oral presentation on their issue paper (more handed out about this later). These presentations will be on 4/3, 4/10 and 4/17.

Journal (15%)
You are required to keep a reflection journal. While you should note the hours you work and your work tasks and projects, you will be asked to go beyond this mere listing. The journal will be a space for you to reflect on your internship – how is it meeting your expectations? If you were in charge how might you solve any issues that arise? How are you balancing your school work and internship work? What kinds of questions does this work raise for you? What is happening locally or nationally that is impacting your organization? Some weeks I will ask you to reflect on specific questions (some already noted in the syllabus). Each week you will upload the previous week’s entry to OAKS by noon Wednesday. At the end of the semester you will submit the entire journal.

Internship placement (40%)
Grade is based on the successful completion of 140 hours of work and on the feedback provided by your site supervisor.

Course Schedule

1/9  Introduction
Guest: Erin Blevins

1/16  Idea of Work
Read: “Servant leadership and procedural justice in the U.S. national park service: the antecedents of job satisfaction,” Jin Chung, Chan Jung, Gerard Kyle and James Petrick (OAKS)

Bring into class a copy of your organization’s mission statement.

Journal questions: What are your expectations of this internship (and this class)? What would you like to get out of it? What do you think that your organization can get from you? How do you understand job satisfaction?

1/23  Idea of Work continued
Read: “Opportunity Costs: the true price of internships,” Madeleine Schwartz
Journal questions: Are interns “invisible” at your internship site? How would you compare what is happening (thus far!) in your internship to the argument Schwartz has about internships?

1/30

**Issue: prisons/crime**
Read: “The prison population is dropping: Can you guess why?” Kevin Drum and “Lead Poisoning causes crime?” Ronald Bailey (OAKS)

Journal questions: If your internship deals with crime and punishment then reflect directly on these two articles and the understanding of the issues that you see at your internship site. For everyone: talk to people at your internship site about their interests: are their connections between what they are interested in and the work that they do? What do you think of as your interests? Take the strong interest survey by this date!

2/6

**Issue: What shall I do with my life?**
Strong Interest survey
Guest: Meredith Gerber
Career Services

Journal questions: Now that you are 3+ weeks in start thinking about your internship and potential jobs/careers. What is the work that you are doing that you find most engaging? What would you change?

2/13

**Issue: Unfilled jobs**
Read “The long haul,” Ben Casselman and “Small firms seek skilled workers” Emily Maltby and Sarah Needleman (all in one file on OAKS)
Organizational Analysis due

2/20

**Issue: Work and Gender**
Read: “Trickle Down feminism” Sarah Jaffe

Journal questions: how does gender “work” in your internship site? How gendered is it? How do you know this? Does this tell you anything about gender and work?

2/27

**Issue: Americans and vacations**
Read: “No vacation nation – USA” European economic and employment policy brief

3/6

**No Class Spring Break**
(Be sure to remind your supervisor that this is Spring Break week)

3/13

**Issue: Walkable cities**
Read: “Crisis in American Walking,” Tom Vanderbilt (OAKS)

3/20

**Issue: retirement**
Read: “Our ridiculous approach to retirement savings,” Teresa Ghilarducci
retirement savings and retirement fact sheet

**Issue Papers drafts Due**

3/27

Issue and reading open – make suggestions!

4/3

Presentations

4/10

Presentations
Site evaluation due

4/17

Presentations
Thank you letter to site supervisor

4/24

Wrap-up
Entire journal due.
Final draft of issue paper due.