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 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 what is most effective for you by participating actively. There are readings for some classes; but depending on your internships and your interests, readings will be added as the semester moves forward (all announcements about new readings will be posted on OAKS).

**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.

*Presentation (10%)*

Each student will give an oral presentation on their issue paper (more handed out about this later). These presentations will start 3/26.

*Journal (15%)*

You are required to keep a reflection journal. While you should note the hours that 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). You will post your journal entries to the OAKS journal weekly dropbox by 9am Wednesday morning.

Organization analysis (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 1/22. This paper is due 2/26 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 3/19. You will have an opportunity to rewrite your paper after your presentation. Final drafts are due 4/16.

Internship placement (40%)

Grade is based on the successful completion of 140 hours of work and on the feedback provided by your site supervisor.

Required Readings

You Majored in What? Katherine Brooks,

Gig: Americans Talk about their Jobs, Edited by John Bowe, Marisa Bowe and Sabin Streeter

National and Local Newspapers

Course Schedule

1/8  Introduction  
Guest: Erin Blevins

1/15  Idea of Work  
Read: Introduction to Gig. Read 5 additional interviews of your own choosing. Choose at least one with a job you would love to have, one a job you imagine never having and one that seems intriguing.

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? Include the learning objectives from your internship agreement and note what it will mean for you to accomplish these (or begin to accomplish them!).

1/22

**Idea of Work continued**

Read: Internships as work 1 and 2 – articles on OAKS

Journal: How does your own internship fit into these arguments about unpaid internships? Why does your workplace have interns (here you should talk to someone to explore answers)? Do you think that unpaid internships are ethical? Why or why not?

1/29

**What shall I do with my life?**

Read: *You Majored in What?* (chs 1-2)

Journal: How does this internship fit into your future career plans? What skills are you attaining that you could put to use in a future career? What kind of insider view do you think you can get from this experience? How different is this internship experience from your prior work experience?

2/5

**Thinking about your major**

Read: *You Majored in What?* chs. 3-4

Journal Questions: Do a major map (you can describe doing this in your journal and then bring the copy of the map to class – or if you produce an electronic copy bring it on a usb.

2/12

**Participation: what makes people participate in politics?**

Read: Regina Bateson “Crime Victimization and Political Participation” (on OAKS)

Journal Questions: This article is only potentially related to some of your internships: if it is related then think about what questions this article potentially raises within the context of your internship. For others we will be discussing the article in light of political science research and where such research potentially leads. Spend part of your journal addressing wider questions this article raises in light of other classes, your own interests in studying politics, etc.)

2/13

**Political Science Convocation of Majors**

*John Prendergast*

4pm, Physician’s Auditorium: attendance required

2/19

**Issues about Work**

Read: Don Peck, “They’re Watching you at Work” (OAKS)

Journal Questions: How does hiring work at your internship site? (Recognizing that some of you are working at very small organizations
and some at much larger ones.) What are the qualities that your organization is looking for and how do those qualities translate into job success? How does reading this article change the way you think about yourself as a job candidate?

2/26

**Organizational Structure**
Read: *You Majored in What?* Chs 5-7

**Organizational Analysis due**
(be sure you have completed your strong interest survey by this date)

Journal Questions: Do you see your internship site differently now that you have completed your organizational analysis? At this point in the semester what are you thinking about the success of your internship site: do they understand their own mission? Are they focused on achieving that mission?

3/5

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

3/12

**Strong Interest survey**
Guest: Meredith Gerber
Career Services

Journal Questions: Think about your expectations from the strong interest survey: what do you think it will tell you?

3/19

**Class topic: TBA**
Read: TBA

**Rough Draft of Issue Papers Due**

3/26

**Presentations**

4/2

**Presentations**

4/9

**Presentations**
Thank you letter to site supervisor

**Site evaluation due**

4/16

**Wrap-up**

**Final draft of issue paper due.**