

Department of Political Science Internship FAQ Sheet

What is an internship?

An internship is a work experience related to politics, government, and/or public policy.

How do I find out about available internships?

While you are ultimately the one who will seek out and acquire your own internship experience, here are some resources to get you started. The department has partnered with the SC Senate Judiciary Committee to create a spring semester internship with this committee. Information and applications are sent out via POLINOTE each fall. Additionally, the department sends out information about internships via POLINOTE whenever we receive internship descriptions and requests from political/governmental entities. Also, the USC Office of Career Planning and Placement is an excellent resource to explore internship options. Many students seek internships in state government, particularly in the legislative and executive branches; and students have also done internships in other state agencies - such as Commerce; SLED; and Parks, Recreation & Tourism. Students have completed internships within branches of federal government and with governmental agencies in Washington, DC, all of whom have information about student internships on their websites. Other internship opportunities include working on political campaigns, working at a political party headquarters, and working with non-governmental agencies who have functions closely associated with politics and/or government (e.g., some recent examples include The League of Women Voters, Project Votesmart, the Columbia World Affairs Council, various Washington, DC think tanks).

How do I get academic credit for an internship?

You may earn internship credit for an internship by registering for POLI 379, Public Affairs Internship, during the academic term in which you are completing an internship work experience. You must register for this course by the deadline for registration for the semester in which you are doing the internship.

Students must meet the following criteria to qualify to register for POLI 379:

1. sophomore standing (cumulative hours earned of 30 or more hours);
2. prior completion of at least six (6) credit hours of POLI course work at the 300 or higher level;
3. for International Studies majors and minors - your internship experience *must* be internationally focused to count toward IS major or minor credit.

Registration for POLI 379 requires a completed internship contract, which must be turned into the University Registrar before you can register for the course. This contract outlines requirements to complete the internship and requires the following signatures for

approval: the departmental internship faculty supervisor (Dr. David Darmofal), your advisor, the Department of Political Science chairman, and your academic dean. To complete the contract, you should make an appointment with the internship coordinator, Janis Leaphart. You need to bring with you to this appointment a letter from the agency, organization or office in which the internship is to be completed. The letter must be on letterhead and attest to the fact that the student has the internship and include the following specific information:

1. the inclusive dates of the internship and the hours per week required by the internship;
2. the duties to be performed as part of the internship;
3. the name, address and phone number of the internship supervisor in that agency, organization or office. **(Please note: your internship supervisor at the agency must be a fulltime, paid staff person who is not a college student.)**

After your appointment with Ms. Leaphart, you will need to get the dean's signature (Flinn Hall, Suite 110); then you will take your contract to the registrar's office. Once you've turned it in to them, you will be able to register.

Note: POLI 379 is a regular course to which all University registration deadlines, rules, fee and tuition charges apply.

How many hours of credit can I earn with an internship?

Credit is variable, and you can earn either three credit hours or six credit hours. You must complete 150 work hours (at least 10 hours per week in a regular semester) to earn three credit hours and 300 work hours (at least 20 hours per week in a regular semester) to earn six credit hours. You must also complete the required assignments (see the next section) and submit a performance evaluation done by your on-site internship supervisor. Many students successfully complete internships during the summer months, but keep in mind that you must still work the same number of hours (i.e., 150/300) to receive academic credit, and you must register for POLI 379 during the summer session in which you complete your internship hours (usually Summer II). POLI 379 may be applied to major, minor, or cognate credit. A maximum of six credit hours may be applied for major credit; a maximum of three hours may be applied toward the Political Science or International Studies minor (note: to count toward an IS minor, the experience must be internationally focused).

What are the assignments for this course and how is my grade determined for POLI 379?

The required assignments for POLI 379 are as follows:

1. You must maintain a daily journal and be prepared to submit it to Dr. Darmofal when requested throughout the semester (log is 30% of final grade). You will receive additional information about the daily log, including how it can be kept and when it is to be turned in, after you have enrolled in POLI 379.
2. You must successfully complete the internship and make sure that your onsite supervisor at the internship site completes the required evaluation form and returns it to Dr. Darmofal (evaluation is 30% of final grade).
3. For a three hour internship experience, you must write a one paper relating the internship experience to political science research, theory and course work. For a six hour internship experience, you must complete two papers. The paper assignment(s) is 40% of final grade.

The paper(s) must be submitted by Reading Day of the semester in which you are enrolled in POLI 379. The supervisor's evaluation and the journal are also due by Reading Day.