

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON SEMESTER PROGRAM, SPRING 2007
SYLLABUS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND
FOREIGN POLICY INTERNSHIP--UNIT I
(SIS497-001T) (4 credit hours)

Professor and Academic Advisor: Dr. Christian J. Maisch

"Experience is not a matter of having actually swum the Hellespont, or danced with the dervishes.... It is a matter of sensibility and intuition, of seeing and hearing the significant things, of paying attention at the right moments, of understanding and coordinating. Experience is not what happens to a [hu]man [being]; it is what a [hu]man [being] does with what happens to him [or her]." Aldous Huxley

NOTE: Students should keep all syllabi and weekly schedules as documentation of their academic work during this semester. Some of the home universities may require their students to submit these documents in order to grant full credit for the courses taken in the Washington Semester Program.

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Internship Program is designed to provide all students with career-related, on-the-job experience in a professional office environment. It not only serves to introduce the students to the practical side of Washington policy-making and implementation, but also serves as a first step in the development of each student's future professional career.

Although the focus of the internship is experiential learning, the program is founded on the premise that people do not simply "learn by doing." In fact, it is the Washington Semester Program's belief that practical learning is enhanced by individual introspection, by sharing experiences with peers, and by comparing personal observations with those found in the scholarly literature on organizational behavior and dynamics. Consequently, the Internship Course has three goals or learning outcomes: (1) to maximize the students' learning during their time in the field, (2) to increase the students' ability to articulate what they have learned, and (3) to increase the students' awareness of the learning process itself.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

Reflecting the goals of the program, the Internship Course has two integral and equally important dimensions: the work experience itself and the academic component. While the former focuses upon giving all students "hands-on" and "real world" exposure in their field of interest, the latter is designed to help place each student's work experiences in a larger context. Through written assessments of work experiences, group discussion sessions with the internship professor, and practical exercises, the academic part of the Internship Course provides a framework for structuring the students' experiential learning. By the end of the program, both the internship and the academic component will have allowed

every student to develop significant insights into not only how Washington works, but also how well he or she works in the Washington environment.

II,A. The Work Component

II,A,1. Identifying Possible Internships

There are a number of resources available to help the students in their internship search. Students should not hesitate to consult with their Internship Course professor for information and advice. In addition to the Washington Semester Program Internships Database, the Washington Semester Program Internship Office (located in Constitution Hall, room 100) has additional useful materials, including directories of organizations, such as the Washington Information Directory and the Congressional Staff Directory. Also, the Reference Section of the Bender Library and the Career Center (both located on the Main Campus of American University) have a number of reference guides on governmental and non-governmental organizations based in the Washington area. Past evaluations of internship offices by former students are available in the Federal Hall Reading Room (located down the hallway from the Federal Hall Computer Lab). BEFORE accepting an offer from an office, all students should check if there are any evaluations from former students who interned at that specific office and read the evaluations carefully. All students are responsible for reading all the materials in their packet relating to the internship, knowing what they are agreeing to, and providing all the requested information.

In the internship search process, all students are expected to set up and go to at least three interviews, and preferably more.

Students in Unit I of the International Politics and Foreign Policy Semester may arrange internship search interviews for the following dates:

- Friday afternoon, January 12 (Please note that you will also be able to conduct preliminary on-the-spot interviews at the Washington Semester Program Internship Bazaar or Fair, which has been scheduled for Friday morning, January 12th)
- Tuesday, January 16 (all day)
- Monday, January 22 (all day)
- Tuesday, January 23 (all day)
- Monday, January 29 (all day)
- Tuesday, January 30 (all day)

Once weekly schedules are handed out during the first weeks of the semester, interviews may be set up for any remaining free time on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. However, students may not miss a seminar session to go on an internship interview without the express permission of their seminar professor.

II,A,2. Interviewing

The internship interviews provide students with the opportunity to explore the different types of work experiences available. Students should keep in mind that these are in fact job interviews--they are selecting an internship position which will be one of the focal points of their time in Washington and the internship office is choosing among several qualified candidates for the position. As such, students should treat the interviewing process as they would a job interview. They should learn from it and concentrate on developing skills that will serve them well in the future. The key to a successful interview is preparation and thought. In the limited time available, students should consider some of the following steps to good interviewing.

- Every student should clarify his or her goals, objectives, and preferences beforehand and try to discover as much information as possible about the office where he or she is interviewing. In this context, students should consider some of the following soul-searching questions:
 - What do I consider to be the most important criteria for choosing an internship? Is it the size or type of the organization, the subject or type of work, the name recognition or prestige, the prospects for getting a job in the future, or the people who work there? Your criteria is crucial in helping you choose the right internship for you, as well as in helping you keep things in perspective on those days when other aspects of your internship become frustrating.
 - What do I want politically and philosophically from my internship? Is it important for me that the organization I work for reflects or challenges my political and social beliefs?
 - What work setting do I prefer? Do I want structure or independence? Do I want low or high pressure? Do I want a casual or formal environment?
 - What type of work do I enjoy the most? Do I want to focus on research and writing or on people and fieldwork? (To help you respond to this crucial question, Dr. Maisch has scheduled a workshop predicated on the model developed by Professor Lloyd Raines "Discovering the Skills that Energize You.")
- Students should find out what the office or organization does, what political biases or business orientations it has, and what issues or activities are of concern to it.
- Every student should have his or her résumé and a writing sample

available for use during the interview.

- Students should prepare for interviews by considering how they would respond to the typical questions (and by practicing their responses with peers):
 - "Why does this internship interest you?"
 - "What have you heard about us?"
 - "How does this internship relate to your course of study in college or your career plans?"
 - "What do you have to offer?"
 - "What are your three biggest strengths and your three biggest weaknesses?"
 - "Where do you plan to be in five years?"
... and of course, the most difficult question,
 - "What can you tell me about yourself?"

- Students should not ignore the logistics involved in the interviewing process:
 - All students are responsible for finding out the exact spelling and pronunciation of the name of the person interviewing them (if necessary, they should ask the receptionist on the way in).
 - All students are responsible for keeping records of the exact times of their interviews.
 - All students are responsible for confirming the exact location of the offices they have agreed to visit and for planning how long it will take them to get there.
 - All students are responsible for allowing plenty of time to find the office and arrive a little early for the interview; being late for an interview gives an extremely poor first impression.
 - All students should, if possible, try out the public transportation system before beginning the interview process.

- Before entering the interview, every student should take a moment to collect his or her thoughts about his or her interests, skills, work objectives, and experiences. Every student should keep a clear picture of himself or herself in mind.

- All students must observe the highest professional standards on their interviews. They should dress appropriately and remember that politeness will open many doors. They should be relaxed but attentive, responsive, and keep in mind that enthusiasm is always appreciated.

- Most importantly, the students should be prepared to ask

questions. There is a lot the students should want to know, such as:

- What are the specific duties and responsibilities of the intern?
- Who would be their immediate supervisor and how closely will they be supervised? **Students must ask-politely-to meet their prospective immediate office supervisor or make a follow-up appointment to meet this person before they accept a position.**
- What is the office's chain of command, and what would be their place in it? (Students should consider whether they would feel comfortable within that structure.)
- What are the types of projects in which the student will participate and what opportunities are there for participation in other activities of the organization?

By thinking ahead and asking questions, students can work to direct their own interview. Their input into the interview allows them to express and discuss their interests in particular projects and tasks. Moreover, by asking questions a student can let an interviewer know what the student would be interested in doing as an intern.

- On leaving the interview, all students must find out what the prospective employer's time-frame is for making a decision and when and how they can be contacted to find out their decision. On occasion, an office may make an immediate offer. If the student is interested in the position, but not sure about it or has not yet completed the minimum number of interviews expected, he or she should thank the prospective employer and reaffirm his or her interest. Yet, the student must hasten to add that he or she will have to respond later because--according to program practice--every student is required to have three interviews before he or she can accept a given offer. If the student is not interested in the position but does not feel comfortable giving a negative response to the prospective employer at that time, the student should say that he or she will respond by telephone after completing the interview process. Upon completion of all interviews, each student should then make a personal decision on which position is best for him or her. The Internship Course professor will be available to help the student sort through his or her options, but ultimately the choice will remain the student's decision.

II,A,3. Choosing the Internship

All students in the International Politics and Foreign Policy Semester are encouraged to select an internship that will expose them to substantive issues in the fields of international

relations and foreign policy. Such an internship will complement their work in the seminar. If the student prefers to choose an internship in another field, he or she should consult with the professor.

Once a student has narrowed down his or her choices to the point where he or she is ready to accept an offer, the student must schedule a meeting with his or her prospective supervisor **before signing the Description of Internship Duties Form.** At this meeting, the student must (1) have a fully detailed discussion with his or her prospective office supervisor concerning the student's duties and (2) politely ask his or her future office supervisor to indicate clearly (and in as much detail as possible) the student's specific duties in the Description of Internship Duties Form. This careful examination of the supervisor's expectations and student's duties is crucial. It will help avoid possible misunderstandings and disappointments during the semester. The student must also use this opportunity to ensure that sixty percent of his or her duties will be entry-level professional work (such as, substantive research, writing, attending congressional hearings or panel presentations and writing reports on them). If necessary, students should explain to prospective office supervisors that they are going to receive academic credit for this internship, and that, therefore, their Internship Course professor will be expecting them to show that they have learned substantive information from their work experience.

The program-wide deadline for finding an internship and submitting to the Internship Course professor the Description of Internship Duties Form (filled out and signed by the office supervisor and the student) is Wednesday, January 31st, at 5:00 p.m. (Because students in Unit I of the Foreign Policy Semester will not start working until Monday, February 5th, they will have for all practical purposes until Friday, February 2nd, at 5:00 p.m. to submit their contracts.) If a student is having difficulties finding an internship, he or she must see the Internship Course professor well ahead of the deadline.

Once the office supervisor and the student-intern have signed the Description of Internship Duties Form, the student must bring the form back to the professor. A photocopy of the form will be sent to the employer after the professor approves the internship.

Once a student has found an internship, he or she is responsible for notifying all previously contacted offices of his or her decision, preferably in person, or through a formal letter sent by regular mail, or through a telephone conversation (not just a voicemail message). Please avoid using e-mail messages to notify an office supervisor that you are declining his or her internship

offer unless the office supervisor has explicitly stated that electronic communications are acceptable for this kind of communication or has been communicating with you via e-mail. (Some office supervisors may still consider e-mail communications rather informal or even unprofessional, and may not appreciate being notified that a student is declining an internship offer simply via an e-mail message, particularly when the supervisor made the offer in person, via a telephone call, or a formal letter.) No office supervisor should be left wondering about a student's intentions. Students should tie up all loose ends before starting the actual work experience, so that they "do not burn any bridges" for themselves or for future students in the Washington Semester Program.

II,A,4. Starting and Handling the Internship Work Experience

As noted above, the first date for reporting to work for students in Unit I of the International Politics and Foreign Policy Semester should be no later than Monday, February 5th. Students may, of course, begin working before, but they should not change internships after they start their work.

All students in Unit I of the International Politics and Foreign Policy Semester must work eight hours both on Mondays and Tuesdays. They should be prepared, however, to show professional commitment and flexibility. There will be days when they will be asked to help with special office projects requiring longer hours. On those occasions, students should remember that supervisors would appreciate flexibility. Moreover, supervisors are more likely to entrust the student-interns with better assignments and greater responsibility if the students are team players, that is, professionals who are more concerned with finishing a job than with keeping a rigid eight-hour-per-day schedule. (A professional is never a "clock-watcher.") Yet, students should remember that any additional time they commit to their internship may not be at the expense of seminar sessions or schoolwork. If a student has a problem in this regard, he or she should see his or her professor.

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Note Concerning the Spring 2007 Calendar of Classes--In accordance with American University's academic calendar for this Spring Semester, please keep in mind the following dates:

- *Spring Break will be from Saturday, March 10th through Sunday, March 18th. Students will be required to be back for work at their internship offices on Monday, March 19th.*
- *Students must work at their internship offices at least until Monday, April 30th in order to get credit.*

It is every student's responsibility to advise his or her internship supervisor--before accepting an internship position—that Spring Break will be from March 10th through March 18th and that April 30th is the student's last day of work.

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The only valid reason for switching internships after a student has accepted an offer and the Description of Internship Duties Form has been signed by the office supervisor is if the employer fails to meet the terms indicated in the Description of Internship Duties Form. Accordingly, it is extremely important that every student takes the initiative to make sure that his or her Description of Internship Duties Form defines his or her specific duties in detail, clearly stipulating that sixty percent of the time will be spent in substantive entry-level professional work.

All students should seek to set up regular meetings with their office supervisors (weekly or biweekly) regarding progress and work performance so there are no surprises during evaluation time at the end of the semester. While it will be good for the student's own personal and professional growth to learn to handle manageable problems in a mature and independent manner, students should not hesitate to seek their internship professor's advice. The internship professor will be available to help a student assess the seriousness of a problem and to help him or her think through a problem and consider the best way to handle it. Also, if the problem persists even after the student has made a first attempt to work things out with his or her supervisor directly, the professor can then act as a liaison and trouble-shooter between the student and the supervisor.

All students should remember that while they should consult with their professor whenever there is a problem at work, when the time comes to try to solve the problem at the office proper, the students must be careful to respect the chain of command at their offices. If they have a problem with their supervisor, they should approach their Internship Course professor first for guidance, and then try to handle the problem with their supervisor directly. Unless it is an emergency or a very delicate situation which cannot be handled directly (and the professor can help identify those situations), circumventing the proper chain of command can make a student appear unprofessional.

All students must remember that they must behave in a professional manner at ALL TIMES while they are with personnel from their internship offices (whether on the job or off the job). Their supervisors will expect such professional demeanor. Moreover, maintaining a professional demeanor at all times is not only the students best way to make a good impression, but also the best way to help make sure that the supervisors treat them professionally. If at any time a student should sense that his or her supervisor is not behaving properly, the student must inform his or her Internship Course professor immediately. Fortunately, such cases are rare, but no student should hesitate to tell his or her professor if he or she runs into a problem. In fact, if the problem is serious enough to warrant intervention, the student has

an obligation to make the professor aware of it.

Approximately mid-way through the semester, the internship professor will contact all internship offices to talk with the supervisors and ascertain that things are going smoothly. If they are not going smoothly, again, the student is responsible for informing the professor as soon as possible, preferably before mid-semester or before the internship professor starts contacting all internship offices.

Near the end of the semester, an evaluation form will be sent to the office supervisor to enable him or her to assess the student's performance. Because this evaluation counts for forty percent (40%) of the final internship grade, it is important that the students make the best professional impression on their office supervisors at all times. Please find below the list of questions included in the evaluation form that will be sent to all office supervisors for them to evaluate the work performance of their student-interns:

1. Briefly, what are the types of work assigned to the student during the semester?
2. Was the student able to complete a suitable portion of the assignments? Were you satisfied with them? (If not, please explain.)
3. How would you rate the following skills as demonstrated in the assignments that the intern performed?
 - (a) Research skills (ability to gather relevant information in a systematic manner):
 - (b) Analytical skills (analysis and application in a problem-solving situation):
 - (c) Written expression:
 - (d) Initiative:
 - (e) Personal organization:
 - (f) Dependability:
 - (g) Promptness:
4. Did the intern have a good personal relationship with his/her fellow workers?
5. What traits may be of particular help in his/her future work experience?
6. What traits may hinder the intern in his/her future work experience?
7. What is your overall evaluation of the intern (in terms of adaptability, competence, personality, general skills)?
8. If you feel comfortable assigning a letter grade for this intern, please do so here by using the A-F rating scale:
9. Overall/additional comments which we may use in writing recommendation letters for this student in the future.

II, B. The Academic Component

During the course of the semester, there will be periodic internship meetings to discuss experiences, dilemmas, coping techniques, and other issues. The professor will act as a moderator in these meetings, but the students will initiate most of the discussion by sharing their experiences.

The **tentative** schedule of dates and topics for the internship meetings (unless re-scheduling becomes necessary to accommodate guest speakers) is as follows:

January 11: First Internship Workshop: "Discovering the Skills that Energize

You"

February 9: Second Internship Meeting: "How Did I Find My Internship and

What Have I Learned from the Process" Note: 1st Internship Journal

Summary Due (See Below)

March 2: Third Internship Meeting: "Problem Solving Techniques at Work"

Note: 2nd Internship Journal Summary Due

(See Below)

March 30/April 13: Fourth Internship Meeting: "Careers in International Affairs" Note: Interview

Assignment Due (See Below)

April 27: Final Internship Meeting: "Lessons Learned from the Work Experience" Note: Final Internship Project Due (See Below)

Attendance, punctuality, and participation at these meetings are mandatory.

All students must keep a journal of their internship. They should write in their journals at least once a week if not after each interview during the internship search or after each day of work once they start their internships. Starting with the third internship meeting (the first two internship meetings at the very beginning of the semester are workshops to help the students find the right internship), every student will be required to submit a summary of his or her journal. These summaries may be handwritten and should be between three to four pages. These summaries do not need to include all of the details or personal feelings that a student may record in his or her journals, but they should be a thoughtful reflection on the learning experiences that the students will have in what will be--for most of them--their first

professional job. These journal summaries should record thoughtfully the student's work experience, providing a serious evaluation of his or her own personal and professional growth. The first summary of the journal should describe the student's experience in finding an internship, addressing the following questions to be discussed in the third internship meeting:

- (1) What were the student's initial internship expectations before and upon arrival in Washington?
- (2) What did the student do prior to his or her arrival in Washington to facilitate the search?
- (3) Which resources did the student use during the search and which ones were most useful?
- (4) What interviews did the student schedule and why? Describe the interview process. Was the student surprised by any of the questions posed to him or her? What techniques did the student find most useful to convey his or her message?
- (5) How did the student arrive at his or her final decision? Why did he or she choose his or her internship?
- (6) What is the mission of the student's agency?
- (7) What advice would the student give to future Washington Semester Program students about the internship search?
- (8) What does the student want to achieve with his or her internship?

The second journal summary and corresponding internship meeting should address the following topics:

- (9) How were the first days at the internship? Was the student given any sort of orientation? How was the process of socialization into the office routine?
- (10) How is the student coping with the process of adapting to a new working environment? What is the student's reaction to the first days on the job, intellectually and emotionally?
- (11) What does the student find most surprising about the Washington, D.C. work environment or culture?
- (12) What are the agency's organization, leadership style, and internal communications techniques? Who sets the agency's policies?
- (13) Is there any tension in the office? If so, what are the sources of this tension, and what is its impact on productivity? And how do these problems affect the agency's ability to achieve its mission?
- (14) What was the nature and scope of the student's original responsibilities and how have they evolved over time?
- (15) How does the student ensure that instructions from supervisors are clear?
- (16) What standards are used to evaluate the work of the office staff and the work of the interns? What are the differences?
- (17) What problems, if any, has the student encountered, and what problem-solving techniques has he or she found most useful?

- (18) What are the possibilities for career-advancement in the office, and what is the student's overall reaction to his or her experience? Could the student make a career out of it?

Additionally, students should include any situations, experiences, or general observations they consider significant. Students should keep in mind that the journal is not merely a personal diary of their internship days; it should be introspective, reflective, and substantive. The major criteria used for evaluating the journal summaries will be the amount of effort shown, the overall input, and the extent to which serious assessment of the internship experience is pursued.

By the fourth internship meeting, all students must have interviewed a high level person in their organization, their supervisor or someone even higher, and prepared a short paper (see below). Students should explain to their potential interviewee that as part of their educational experience, they would like to learn about his or her career. Students should make an appointment for approximately thirty minutes in the office—**STUDENTS MUST INQUIRE ABOUT SUCH AN APPOINTMENT BY FEBRUARY 13TH. SOME HIGH-RANKING PERSONS REQUIRE A SIGNIFICANT LEAD TIME.**

Students should get from their organization's website or ask for a copy of the interviewee's bio or résumé before the interview so that they can prepare some questions. Students should conduct an internet search on their interviewee to find out more. Students should ask this person a variety of questions about their education and career backgrounds, how they decided where to work, what they enjoy most and least about their work, what aspirations they have, and what advice they have for young professionals. Students could also ask about non-work activities such as hobbies and if he or she has any advice about balancing work and non-work activities. After the interview, students must write a short paper (two to three pages) about the experience. It is not to be a list of the questions and answers. Instead, it should include a description of the conditions under which the interview was conducted, the student's analysis of the interviewee's responses, the student's observations about how this person relates to the rest of the office, the student's plans to keep this person in his or her network, and other reflections. The student should note if this person treats him or her any differently after the interview.

Final Internship Project: Every student must prepare a short paper--four to five double-spaced, typed pages (or approximately 1,000 words)--analyzing his or her work experience in terms of (1) the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization for which he or she worked, and (2) the meaning of the work experience for him or her in terms of personal and professional growth. Students should write this paper as a testimony of their experience and as advice for future Washington Semester students. The tentative due

date for this Final Internship Project is April 27th.

Final Internship Meeting: For the final internship meeting (tentatively scheduled for April 27th or May 2nd) all students should prepare a brief oral presentation of their final internship project. Students who have worked together or in the same type of internship (for instance, for a congressional office) may wish to organize a group or panel presentation. (When appropriate, material from the seminars could also be used in the preparation of these presentations.)

The final grade for this course will be determined as follows: Forty percent (40%) of the grade will be based on the office supervisor's evaluation of the student work performance. The other sixty percent (60%) will be based on the internship professor's assessment of the student's course performance in terms of attendance, punctuality, professionalism, participation in the internship meetings, and prompt submission of good-quality internship journal summaries, interview report, and final project.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

First Internship Workshop.....	Jan 11
Internship Bazaar.....	Jan 12
Deadline for Finding an Internship and submitting Description of Internship Duties Form..	Jan 31 / Feb 2
Deadline for Starting to Work at an Internship.....	Feb 5
Second Internship Meeting (First Internship Journal Summary Due).....	Feb 9
Deadline for Requesting Interview for the Internship Interview Assignment.....	Feb 13
Third Internship Meeting (Second Internship Journal Summary Due).....	Mar 2
Fourth Internship Meeting (Interview Paper Due).....	Mar 30 / Apr 13
Deadline for Final Internship Project.....	Apr 27
Last Working Day at Internship.....	Apr 30
Final Internship Presentation (tentative).....	Apr 27 / May 2

******* NO INCOMPLETE GRADES WILL BE GRANTED! *******

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A FINAL CAVEAT

Additional standards of academic conduct are set forth in American University's Academic Integrity Code. By participating in the Washington Semester Program, all students have acknowledged their awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will be taken seriously, and disciplinary actions will ensue should such violations occur. Students must consult their professor if they have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements in this program.

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PLEASE FILL OUT AND SIGN THE ATTACHED AGREEMENT

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
AND FOREIGN POLICY INTERNSHIP--UNIT I
(SIS497-001T)

Professor and Unit Director: Dr. Christian J. Maisch

PLEASE FILL OUT AND GIVE THIS FORM TO DR. MAISCH UPON REQUEST:

I, _____, certify that I have read and understood this syllabus, and that I am willing to assume the responsibility of complying with all of the rules and regulations contained herein.

Signature

Date

STUDENT'S FULL NAME IN PRINT LETTERS