

**Washington Semester Program**  
**The American University**  
**Public Law**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Public Law  
Spring 2007  
Seminar Days—Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday  
Daniel M. Freeman  
Assistant Professor

**Objectives:**

The main objective of this seminar is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the institutions through which the U.S. Government makes policy choices on behalf of the American people. We will attempt to examine some of those choices by:

- Expanding your knowledge of the structures, rules and processes of the major policy making and interpretive institutions of the U.S. Government.
- Expanding your knowledge of the interrelationship of those institutions.
- Expanding your knowledge of the non-governmental influences on public policy.
- Examining several major areas of public law and their effect on the American people and the institutions which created them.

**Structure:**

The course will be roughly divided into two major sections—the institutions which comprise the policy-making and interpretation entities of the government, and an examination of some major areas of controversial public policy. Part I will deal with the legislative role of Congress, the Executive branch including the rule-making process, and the interpretive function of the courts. Part II will focus on a myriad of areas of public law which are of concern to the class.

The success of your experience in this program will be up to you. Education is one of the few things for which people are willing to accept less than they pay for. I urge you to work hard to get the maximum out of this endeavor.

**Course requirements:**

[These are not too hard to guess!]

1. You must come to class **without fail**.
2. You must do the assigned readings in preparation for each class **without fail**.
3. You must participate in all discussions whether we have a guest lecturer or not, **without fail**.
4. You must turn in required papers, of which there will be four, on time **without fail**.
5. You must attend at least one (and preferably more) legislative hearing, Congressional session, Federal Appeals Court or Supreme Court argument, or one rule-making hearing **without fail** and write a paper on that session. Clear your choices with me beforehand. We will budget time for these sessions.
6. You must successfully complete the midterm and final exams.

Failure to attend classes, be punctual and meet deadlines will result in grade penalties.

**Readings:**

Each of the **mandatory** readings is assigned to prepare you to understand and participate in the appropriate class. Failure to do the readings robs you of the educational opportunity to understand fully each seminar and also robs your classmates of your best ability to participate in class discussions knowledgably through both observations about what the speakers have said and through your own questions. You must complete the

readings as assigned from the list which will be given to you at the beginning of the semester. Additional readings may be placed on reserve throughout the semester or distributed in class. Completion of these materials is also **mandatory**. You should also keep up with the national press such as the *Washington Post* and at least one other paper, perhaps your hometown paper, to get a different view. [Yes, sometimes there is a different view.]

**Attendance at class and seminars:**

Each seminar represents a unique experience with a Washington policy-maker. Each seminar is irreplaceable and provides unique information to the Washington Semester student that would otherwise be unavailable in a traditional learning environment. This is one of the main reasons why the Washington Semester Program is so successful. Remember, what the speakers say is more important than how they say it.

**Papers:**

Several papers will be assigned during the semester. Each of your papers will be on time, well written and clearly organized. They should provide insights from your readings, classes, and your own analytical thinking based on those readings.

Page limits will be adhered to—no cute tricks with font sizes and margins. Do not submit papers with spelling and grammatical errors, and do not rely on Bill Gates to do your spell checking. When you have finished your paper, put it away for a few hours and then go back and read it again. You can correctly spell the wrong word and Bill will not catch it, e.g. “quite” instead of “quiet”.

**Exams:**

There will be a mid-term exam and a final. Each exam will be drawn from matters covered either by the readings, class lectures, guest lectures or class discussions. Be involved in all and be prepared to integrate all of them into your papers.

**Grades:**

Your grade will be made up of the following components:

Your papers	30%
Midterm exam	25%
Class participation	15%
Final Exam	30%

**Rules:**

Just like any other part of society, there are rules which will apply to this course.

1. Attendance is **mandatory** at all sessions. You will inform me if you need to miss a class due to a personal or family emergency. Personal travel, guests coming to town, interviews, and deadlines for other projects are **not** reasons for an excusable absence. Absence does not make the heart grow fonder—your grade will suffer.
2. You will submit your papers **on time** and they will be complete and accurate.
3. You will be **punctual** to all sessions. Failure to do so is inconsiderate to our guest speakers who donate their time. [They believe in free speech—these speeches are free.] You will be courteous to our speakers in asking questions, but feel free to disagree with them in your questions. In order to assist you in getting around the city efficiently and not being tardy, I suggest you get both a Metro map and a Washington D.C. map. Leave an hour before if you are traveling from campus to a session downtown.
4. You will **participate** in class discussions. You are here to learn—active discussion is one way to do so. There may be [and probably will be] people in

your class who have a very different view on certain issues than you do. [For instance, the French think Jerry Lewis is funny. Go figure.] Engaging people in active discussions in these areas will enhance your experience.

5. Speed is **not** a substitute for efficiency or thoughtful completion of a task. Do not press to do things “Real quick” as many college students do, especially in the age of the internet. Take your time and enjoy the process.
6. **No electronic devices shall be on during any class except for hearing aids and cardiac pacemakers. You will give the class your full attention. There will be no ringing phone, checking email, text messaging of any kind, ever! I reserve the right to remove the offending device from your custody and return it at a later time.**

**Failure to comply with the rules will have a severe negative impact on what you gain from the wonderful opportunity to be in this program and on your grade.**

### **Professionalism:**

You will be treated as professionals and you will act like professionals. I expect us to enjoy this course and have a laugh or two. Your written work and your oral presentations will reflect professionalism. Use of words such as “like”, “awesome” and “totally” inappropriately is frowned upon.

You will dress appropriately for each session. On campus sessions may have a more relaxed atmosphere, but not if we are having a guest speaker. A student in shorts and a T shirt does not make our speakers feel they are in the presence of a serious

student. First impressions do make a difference. You may want to meet that speaker after class.

Students should conduct themselves in a respectful manner towards their speakers, their fellow students and the professor. The attitude a student exhibits in classes, seminars and other class-related interactions will have a substantial affect on his or her class participation grade. Remember class discussions are about exchanging ideas. They are not to be “full contact” shouting matches like some Fox or CNN “debate”. You can only learn by listening. Use the discussions to sharpen and question your own thinking about issues not as an opportunity to put the other point of view down.

### **Academic Integrity Code**

#### **READ THIS CAREFULLY**

American University’s policy is as follows:

Standards of academic conduct are set fort in the University Academic Integrity Code which is provided in your registration packet. By participating in this program, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your 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 violation occur.

OK, enough of the formal requirements. Welcome to Washington where there is a lot happening, a great deal of which will interest you! Always feel free to ask me questions or consult with me about matters. I am here to help you and I want to assist you in every way to have a full and worthwhile learning experience while you are here.

The more you invest in your semester here the more you receive from it. Please come in to chat if you need help or are interested in discussing anything which has come up in class sessions or with our guest speakers. I want you to have the greatest learning experience of you life.