

UMBC
Department of Political Science
Politics in Action: Internship Program
(7 credits)

Instructor: Ron Walters, Ph.D.

The Washington, D.C. area is the focal point of political life in the United States and a unique setting for the study of democratic government. Building upon UMBC's commitment to experiential education and interactive learning, the *Politics in Action: Internship Program* provides an opportunity for students to learn firsthand about the real world of politics and cutting-edge issues in American government.

Overview

The internship program will be offered each spring semester. Students will participate in an academic seminar on policymaking (POLI 350 – 3 credits) and an internship that complements classroom studies (POLI 448 – 4 credits).

The seminar class (POLI 350) will meet on Thursday evenings (6:30 – 9 PM) and as noted on the syllabus. The class will explore the general approaches to and influences on the policy making process in the United States. We will focus on the major actors involved at the national level: Congress, the President, White House staff and executive bureaucracy, and interest groups. We will also explore the substance of US public policy through a focus on select public policy issues. Throughout the seminar, we will use students' personal experiences from their internships to examine the major institutions of American government through the lens of practitioners, and discern the extent to which theory comports with practice.

Internship placement opportunities through UMBC may include Congressional offices, executive agencies, political party organizations, non-profit organizations, state and local offices, the media and interest groups. Whatever the field of interest, there is an organization in the area that can help cultivate a student's educational and career goals.

Students may arrange for an internship on their own – or use an existing job to satisfy the internship requirement – provided that it illuminates some aspect of American government and is approved by the instructor.

Enrolling in the Program

To participate in UMBC's *Politics in Action: Internship Program*, students must register for two courses: an internship (POLI 448 - 4 credits) and an academic seminar (POLI 350 – 3 credits). A total of 7 credits will be awarded for successful completion of the program. *

To enroll in the program, students must have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.0 (B) at UMBC and completed an introductory course in American government with a grade of at least a 3.0 (B).

Students must complete an application form indicating their placement interests, contact information, etc. Applications for the spring semester must be received in the department office no later than November 20, 2015. A copy of the student's transcript must accompany the completed application. The application form is available in the Department office and will be made available online.

Securing an Internship

Securing an internship is ultimately the responsibility of the student; however, assistance will be provided. After admittance into the course, the instructor will schedule a time to speak with each student to help locate an internship consistent with his/her interests. An internship sponsor will most likely require an interview with a student before he/she begins working.

If a student wishes to explore internship possibilities on his/her own, research materials and other resources are available on reserve in the UMBC library (under POLI 350). Again, the specific work assignment must be approved by the instructor and comply with requirements of the course. Please notify the instructor before initiating contact with a potential internship sponsor.

Course Requirements and Grades

POLI 448 – 4 credits: To receive credits and a grade for the internship, students must work a minimum of 15 hours per week and complete a short paper related to their work experience. In addition, an evaluation of the intern's work will be provided by his/her supervisor and submitted to the instructor for grading purposes.

POLI 350 – 3 credits: Grades will be based on two exams, a research paper and class participation. Since participation is critical to the success of this course, students are expected to attend all classes and to be prepared to discuss reading assignments in light of their internship experiences. Additional assignments will be required for students who enroll in this course without an internship.

Questions

Contact Dr. Ron Walters at Ronewdc@aol.com.

**With the permission of the instructor, students may enroll in POLI 350 without having an internship. Students may not enroll in POLI 448 (internship) without taking POLI 350.*