

LA (PLSC) 495
Political Science Internship
Spring 2017

Zachary Baumann, Ph.D.
Department of Political Science
329 Pond Lab

Office Phone: (814) 867-5305
Email: zdb1@psu.edu
Twitter: [@profbaumann](https://twitter.com/profbaumann)

Office Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in 329 Pond Lab (and by appointment)

Course Description

Internships offer the opportunity to gain practical experience in a desired field as well as reinforce and supplement academic coursework. LA 495 is a one-semester course for students doing internships related to Political Science.¹ This course is designed to combine your experiences working in fields such as government, law, public policy, interest advocacy, and international relations among others, with coursework that ties your internship back to the broader study of politics.

This is an academic course. We do not have formal meeting times, but you are responsible for working on your own to complete the required assignments and fulfill your internship obligations. Students are individually responsible for locating and securing their own internships as well as making satisfactory progress on their coursework. To enroll in LA 495 students must complete an application and have it approved by the internship instructor. You may register for a variable number of credits, although only 3 hours can be used for your major requirements in Political Science or International Politics. If you wish to apply these credit hours to your International Politics degree requirements, double-check with your advisor prior to enrolling that your experience will count toward the degree. Not all internships qualify for credit in International Politics.

Learning Goals

The purpose of LA 495 is to integrate academic and experiential learning through internship opportunities. After completing this course you will gain the experience of working in a field related to political science and a greater appreciation for the relevant academic material. Specifically, by the end of your internship experience and this course you should:

1. Develop a reflective and critical understanding of work-life at your internship
2. Identify, explain, and synthesize concepts and theories from the political science or international politics disciplines relevant to your internship

¹ A separate course exists for students participating in Penn State's Washington Program.

Course Materials

You do not need to purchase any course materials for this class. All course materials and submissions will be made using Canvas.

Evaluation

Grades in this course will be determined by your performance on four assignments: a set of essays in which you will *Apply Your Work*, a portfolio of assignments *Exploring the Career*, time sheets, and evaluations. The following formula will be used to calculate your final course grade:

Applying Your Work	40%
Exploring the Career	40%
Time Sheets	10%
Evaluations	10%

We will use the following grading scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82
C+	76 to 79
C	70 to 75
D	60 to 69
F	59 and below

Applying Your Work: The primary goal of this course is to grow your ability to link and apply lessons learned in the classroom to careers and questions encountered outside the walls of Penn State. Over the course of the semester you will craft four brief essays explicitly discussing the relationship between your major and the *real world*. More information about these assignments and their due dates can be found in the following pages. Each submission will be weighted equally in calculating your final semester score.

Exploring the Career: The second goal of this course is to provide you with assignments encouraging you to critically evaluate the field in which you are working and capitalize on the experiences you have been afforded. You will develop and submit a portfolio of assignments exploring what a career in this field entails and what is necessary for you to achieve your future goals. The four components of this portfolio can be submitted any time throughout the semester, but all portions must be completed by April 28th at 11:59 p.m. EST.

Time Sheets: On Canvas you will find time sheets you are required to submit on the 1st of each month. If the 1st happens to fall on a weekend, your time sheets should be submitted the following Monday. On this form you will record the number of hours you worked each day and obtain your supervisor's signature verifying your submission. You will earn full credit for this

assignment if you submit the completed forms on time and work the required number of hours (45 hours for 1 credit; 135 hours for 3 credits).

Evaluations: On Canvas you will find an evaluation that you will complete as well as one that should be given to your supervisor at the end of the term. Toward the end of the semester both you and your supervisor will complete evaluations of the internship. You will also be asked to write an evaluation of the organization you worked for, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of the experience. Your supervisor should discuss your evaluation with you, but I do not require that you share your assessment with your supervisor. You will earn full credit for this portion of your grade if both you and your supervisor complete the evaluations and if you have performed in a satisfactory manner on the job.

Expectations & Procedures

Respect Your Employer: I expect that you will respect your employer, and their time, by putting forward your best effort and working only for them when on the clock. You should not be working on your internship assignments while at the workplace, class assignments should be completed outside these hours.

Be Flexible: While this syllabus represents an agreement between you, the student, and me, the instructor, I reserve the right to revise and modify any parts herein. Situations beyond either of our control may emerge causing us to change the original plan this document puts forth.

Academic Dishonesty. The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at:

<http://laus.la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/college-policies>

Note to Students with Disabilities. Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources Web site provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#). For further information, please visit the [Student Disability Resources Web site](#).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, [participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation](#). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your [campus's disability services office](#) will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Course Schedule

Based on your individual internships we may agree to modify the following due dates, but unless otherwise stated these are the relevant deadlines for the course. All assignments are due by 11:59:59 p.m. EST on the dates listed.

January

No Assignments Due

February

Feb. 1: January Time Sheet Due
 Establishing Expectations Memo Due

March

March 1: February Time Sheet Due
 What's Been Written Assignment Due

April

April 3: March Time Sheet Due
 Academic Resources Assignment

April 28: April Time Sheets Due
 Exit Memo Assignment Due
 Exploring the Career Portfolio Due
 Student & Employer Evaluations Due

Applying Your Work Assignments

The primary goal of this course is to grow your ability to link and apply lessons learned in the classroom to careers and questions encountered outside the walls of Penn State. Over the course of the semester you will craft four brief essays explicitly discussing the relationship between your major and the *real world*. Each of the assignments is discussed below and the due dates can be found in the course schedule. As always, make sure to use in-text citations where appropriate (APSA style required) and include a bibliography/works cited page.

Assignment 1: Establishing Expectations Memo

As you begin your internship, write a memo outlining the experiences you are likely to have and concepts and theories from the major that might be useful. In no more than two paragraphs explain your job and the tasks you will be expected to complete. Next, identify and discuss at least three ideas or theories from your political science or international politics coursework that will be relevant to this work. Each description should be well-developed with the final document about 2-3 pages in length.

Assignment 2: What's Been Written?

Taking a task or problem from your internship, review the scholarly literature in political science and identify five relevant journal (peer reviewed) articles.² Read this research and craft a report summarizing the results in a way that informs the task you have been completing or helps answer your question. Your final draft should synthesize (not list) the results of the articles, explaining how their results help answer your question. While there is not an explicit page limit, I would expect this assignment to be about 4-6 pages in length.

Assignment 3: Academic Resources Assignment

Assemble a set of academic resources for those considering a career or internship in your field. Your submission should include an introductory paragraph explaining the resources presented and the following sections and entries: 1) Academic Books (at least 3 books); 2) Journal Articles (at least 6 articles); 3) Professional Associations (at least 2 associations); 4) Websites and Data (at least 5 websites or databases). For each entry, list the resource and provide 3-4 sentences explaining how it is applicable to your job. Please note, the emphasis of this assignment is on providing *academic* resources, so the books should be from academic presses, the journal articles should be peer reviewed, and the websites should be of sufficiently high quality.

Assignment 4: Exit Memo

Construct a memo to other students thinking about applying for and completing this internship. In no more than three paragraphs explain the work you completed over the semester. Next, identify at least two concepts or theories from the discipline that corresponded with your tasks that would be important for them to understand. Finally, in 2-3 paragraphs, provide them with advice about classes they should possibly take before starting work, experiences they should be prepared for, and any other information you would have liked to have known before starting.

² Examples of tasks or problems may include: How do we get people to vote for us? How does the US strengthen its relationship with other nations? Why do lawyers win some cases and lose others? What causes some bills to fail and others to succeed?

Exploring the Career Assignments

The second goal of this course is to provide you with assignments encouraging you to critically evaluate the field in which you are working and capitalize on the experiences you have been afforded. You will develop and submit a portfolio of assignments exploring what a career in this field entails and what is necessary for you to achieve your future goals. The four components of this portfolio can be submitted any time throughout the semester, but all portions must be completed by April 28th at 11:59 p.m. EST. Your completed portfolio will include:

Assignment 1: Career Interview & Essay Summary

Seek-out and interview a high-level individual in your career field of interest. Use this opportunity to learn how they achieved their position and the advice they have for people pursuing similar career tracks. You should ask this person a variety of questions about their background experiences, what they enjoy the most/least about their jobs, their future aspirations, what they value in employees and job candidates, and how to get started in the field. Remember, this is your interview – ask questions that are valuable and interesting to you.

After the interview, write a 4-6 page summary of your conversation. This essay should be more than a transcript of your interview, but should discuss why you chose this person to interview, how you conducted the interview, the insights you gained from the conversation, how this person's answers matched your expectations of the field, how you might be able to use this conversation as a starting point in the career field, and any other reflections you have on the interview.

Assignment 2: Potential Jobs Directory

Compile a directory of 10 positions you are interested in holding.³ For each position list the name of the company/organization, the title of the position, any experience required (or preferred) for the job, and the salary. If no salary is listed for the position, do a little research to determine the average for similar jobs. Also include a couple sentences discussing why you would like this position and how well you match their stated expectations.

Assignment 3: Updated Resume

Include an updated resume with your internship experience listed. If you expect to be on the job market soon, this is a good opportunity for you to take some time to develop a well-designed document. Penn State Career Services can provide you with help crafting documents for specific jobs and assist you in your job hunt.

Assignment 4: Collection of Business Cards

To encourage you to use your internship as an opportunity to network, please compile a collection of business cards from individuals you meet while completing your work. From this collection, choose your 8 best business cards to copy and submit. With each business card, provide a short description of where and when you met this person and how this contact could be important to your network.

³ These may be items you are qualified for right now or positions you aspire to hold in the future. The purpose of this assignment is to prompt your thinking about what is necessary to reach your goals -- choose positions that are relevant to your aspirations.