

Practicum in Policy Evaluation and Applied Research
Polt 411 3 credits Tues 7-9 P.M. Eve Sandberg SS 3

Students will research and write on a topic in the policy realm that services the needs of an off-campus legislative-oriented organization. Common readings will focus on how strategies for conducting policy research differ from strategies for conducting social science academic research. All students will be given a timetable for the various components of their research and writing. Students will receive training in 1) a standardized method of presenting written findings and 2) preparing for the presentation of findings to the client. Students will be responsible for twenty-five or more pages of writing, for completing assigned common readings, for attending on-campus visitor presentations, and for participating in a variety of off-site activities. At the end of the course, we will also address issues concerning the business activities of political research consultants and ethical issues raised in consultancy research.

Student research has already been requested by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (African American State Representatives and State Senators at the Capital in Columbus, Ohio who may be affiliated with any political party). Students will be expected to conduct themselves as young professionals who are always courteous and can work with establishment politicians from any political party.

Tuesday September 7, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Diane Schmidt, Expository Writing in Political Science a Practical Guide (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1993) pp. 4-12.

“Reports” in Rosemary T. Fruehling and N.B. Oldham, Write to the Point (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1988. Pp.165-176.

“Conducting Projects” in Robert E. Kelley, Consulting (New York: Scribner, 1986 revised edition) pp. 182-189.

“How to solve Your Client’s Problems Easily” in William A. Cohen, How To Make It Big as a Consultant (New York: American Management Association, 1993 second edition) pp. 132-150.

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Week of September 13, 1999

Library Research Session, Guest Speaker:
Jessica Grimm, Reference Librarian
Oberlin College Library

Required Reading Due:

“The Entrepreneurial Image” in Jennifer Kushell, The Young Entrepreneur’s Edge (New York: Random House, 1999) pp. 145-162

“Proposals and Contracts” in Harvey Kaye, Inside the Technical Consulting Business (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998 third edition) pp.126-153.

“Building Your Practice” in Robert E. Kelley, Consulting (New York: Scribner, 1986 revised edition) pp.155-181.

Off-Site meeting with Ohio Legislative Black Caucus in Columbus, OHIO

Class Trip to Columbus: A Staff Assistant to the Caucus will discuss how a bill becomes a law and various language/terms that you will need familiarity with as you do your research. The Caucus Chairperson and several members of the caucus will meet with us to discuss their legislative concerns and topics for our research.

Tuesday September 21, 1999

Required Reading Due:

“Ten Hints for Collaborative Writing” in Sheryl Lindsell-Roberts, Business Writing for Dummies (Foster City, CA: IDG Books Worldwide, Inc, 1999) pp. 271-277.

- Dividing into research teams
- Writing a client contract for the project on which you will work (Refer to last week’s readings and your notes from your client meeting; that means bring your notes and papers!)
- Establishing a research strategy

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Tuesday September 28, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Diane Schmidt, Expository Writing in Political Science a Practical Guide (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1993) pp.36-51

Memos on your research so far are due today. Lists of contacts and interviews and information secured are also due today. Make multiple copies for distribution to your group and to the professor.

Tuesday October 5, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Diane Schmidt, Expository Writing in Political Science a Practical Guide (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1993) pp.166-203.

Make multiple copies of your completed assignments due today for your group members and for the professor. Student who recently interned in a famous political consultancy firm will join us for class to talk about firm-client relations.

Tuesday October 12, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Make multiple copies of your completed written assignments due today for your group members and for the professor.

Autumn Recess Noon: Saturday October 16, 1999 - Sunday October 24, 1999
Have a good recess.

Tuesday October 26, 1999

Team working session:

Critique writing to date

Identify any new writing assignments

Identify visuals

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- Data collection is due next week

Tuesday November 2, 1999 (election day)

Required Reading Due:

"Making Professional Presentations" in William A. Cohen, How To Make It Big as a Consultant (New York: American Management Association, 1993 second edition) pp. 165-180.

Diane Schmidt, Expository Writing in Political Science a Practical Guide (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1993) pp. 129-133.

Also, a working session on written drafts will be conducted.
Review data collection materials.

Tuesday November 9, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Guest speakers, two recent alumni who are working for different kinds of consulting firms, will discuss the range of consulting firms and how to position yourself for a job in this business.

Tuesday November 16, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Working session on written drafts and data presentation.

Tuesday November 23, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Starting your own consulting business:

Jennifer Kushell, The Young Entrepreneur's Edge (New York: Random House, 1999) pp.163-182; 67-90; 204-210;219-222.

Robert E. Kelley, Consulting (New York: Scribner, 1986 revised edition) pp. 48-64.

Ethical issues in political consulting: Guest speakers to be announced.

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Tuesday November 30, 1999

Required Reading Due:

Each teams' final project report must be brought to class (one copy for the professor, one for the client, and one for reserve reading for other teams to see).

Tuesday December 7, 1999

This week we will travel to the Caucus to make presentations.