

Political Science and You;
or, what to do with a Duke Political Science degree

POLSCI 279, Fall 2018

Mondays, 11:45-1:00 p.m.
Gross Hall 111

Instructor: Curtis Bram, curtis.bram@duke.edu

“...although the cliché says that power always corrupts, what is seldom said, but what is equally true, is that power always *reveals*.”
— Robert Caro (2012, pg. xiv)

“You want a friend in Washington? Get a dog.”
— Unknown

Course Overview:

What will *you* do with your Duke political science degree? This course will prepare you for your (professional) life after leaving Duke, equipping you with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to thrive in your post-Duke career. The class is tailored for those interested in pursuing internships offered in the following summer.

The course has several objectives. One aim of the course is to assist you in developing and articulating career goals. In order to highlight career options, the class will host guest speakers—from the intelligence community and foreign service, to nonprofit organizations, think tanks and the private sector. We will also hear from a panel of representatives from Duke’s graduate schools. These sessions are designed to broaden your thinking about career options that draw together your political science background, workplace preferences, and personal values.

A second aim of the class is to prepare you to excel at the internship application process. You will learn how to research summer internship opportunities, network effectively, and ace internship interviews. You will also leave this course with work products that will position you for success as you begin your career: polished resumes and cover letters, headshots, and a LinkedIn profile.

Third, this class will help you gain skills to thrive as a professional—in your internship and beyond. We will go over a variety of practical considerations about the workplace as well as

broader questions about workplace strategy. The course aims to prepare you for the exhilaration, and vicissitudes, of professional life.

One final note: this course is a part of an effort by the Department of Political Science to support students as you plan for professional success. I would welcome any feedback you have either now or throughout the term as to how this course can best match your career goals.

Grading:

This course will be graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U). In order to receive satisfactory credit for this course, students are expected to:

- Come prepared with, and ask, questions to the guest speakers
- Submit quality work product, on time
- Deliver written and spoken feedback on the work of their classmates
- Be punctual and maintain a near-perfect attendance record
- Read the assigned materials ahead of time and participate in class discussion

Excessive absences or failure to complete all assignments will result in not passing the course. Please discuss any absences with the instructor in advance.

Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted during class time. (Please see me if this will be an issue). Please print all written assignments and bring hard copies to class.

Duke Community Standard:

Students are expected to abide by the Duke Community Standard, which prohibits plagiarism on any assignment. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the Standard and bring any questions to the instructor. Collaborating with and discussing your ideas and work with others is not a violation of the Community Standard, and working with your peers is an essential component of this course.

Readings:

We will be reading excerpts from the following books; you are welcome to purchase your own copies, but all required reading will be posted on Sakai.

- Dalton, Steve (2012). *The 2-Hour Job Search: Using Technology to Get the Right Job Faster.*

- Feaver, Peter, Sue Wasiolek, and Anne Crossman (2012). *Getting the Best Out of College*.
- Perlin, Ross (2012). *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*.

Resources:

Required readings and online materials will be posted on Sakai and / or distributed in class. As you come across any other helpful resources during the semester, feel free to share them with the group. You may also wish to consult:

- Duke Career Center Online Resources
 - <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/online-tools-resources>
- Duke Library Guide to Career Research
 - <https://guides.library.duke.edu/careerresearch>
- Duke Alumni Directory
 - <https://alumni.duke.edu/discover/people>
- Leadership Directories (click 'sign-in' on-campus and you will be logged in to Duke's subscription)
- <https://www.leadershipconnect.io>
- Claremont McKenna College Internship Page
 - <http://www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/JPitney/intern.html>
- American Political Science Association Internship Guide
 - <https://www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/For-Students/Internship-Resources>

Duke Career Center Events (Fall 2018):

You are highly encouraged to attend the following events. An up-to-date listing is available at <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/events>.

- Date Night with Data: Explore Careers in Data Analytics & Data Science (Wednesday September 12th)
- Practice Interview Day for Undergraduate Students (Friday September 14th)
- Fall Career Fair (Wednesday September 26th)
- Career and Summer Opportunities Fair (TBC)
- DC IMPACTlink (TBC)
- Georgetown University's Government and Nonprofit Expo (TBC)
- StartupConnect (TBC)
- InternMix: Peer to Peer Intern Mixer (TBC)

- Ready, Set, Intern! (TBC)

Course Schedule:

[8/27] Class 1: Course Introduction and Self Assessment

Class:

- Introductions and Expectations
- Big Five personality assessment
- Career assessment

HW (Due 9/3):

- Read Feaver, Wasiolek, and Crossman, “So What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up” (16 pages)
- Afterward, write a reflection of no more than two double-spaced pages, “the story of me,” which tells the story of how you got to where you are today. Be creative. In Class 3 we will share these essays with each other and consider how our career choices can best reflect our life trajectory and values.

[9/3] Class 2: Connecting Political Science to your Career

Guest Speaker(s): Michael Munger and/or Peter Feaver

[9/10] Class 3: Big Picture

Class:

- Goal-Setting: where will you go?
- Workshop “the story of me”
- Discuss reading assignment
- Write your personal mission statement

HW (Due 9/24):

- Read Peter Feaver, “It’ll Be Over Before You Know It” (21 pages)
- “Biography of the Future.” Write a one page biography of you five years from now, and write another one page biography of you thirty years from now.

[9/17] Class 4: Introduction to D.C.

Guest Speaker(s): Chris Simmons (Associate Vice President, Office of Government Relations)

Suggested reading: Desai, Saahil (2018), “When Congress Paid Its Interns,”
<https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january-february-march-2018/when-congress-paid-its-interns/>

[9/24] Class 5: Resume / Cover Letter Development

Class:

- Introduction to resumes and cover letters
- Discuss resume and cover letter pitfalls
- Group evaluation of examples

HW (Due 10/15):

- Resume (one page maximum) and cover letter for an internship of your choice

[10/1] Class 6: Foreign Service and the Intelligence Community

Guest Speaker(s): [Ambassador Arnold Chacon](#), [Ambassador Patrick Duddy](#)

[10/8] Fall Break

[10/15] Class 7: Finding and Applying for Internships

Class:

- Visit Duke University Career Center and meet with counselors

HW:

- Research positions of interests. Bring in list of at least five internships to which you plan to apply. Draft cover letter for one of these positions.
- Prepare six interview questions to ask peers.

[10/22] Class 8: The Private Sector

Guest Speaker(s): John Hillen, Aly Breuer, Emma Campbell-Mohn, John O’Halloran, Richard Salsman

[10/29] Class 9: Interview Skills

Class:

- Overview of interview types and strategy
- Group mock interviews

HW (Due 11/12):

- Make a LinkedIn profile and send URL to instructor
- Read excerpt from Ross Perlin, *Intern Nation* (on Sakai)
- Bring in copies of previously completed resume and cover letter

[11/5] Class 10: Graduate School Panel

Guest Speaker(s): Representatives from Law, Graduate School, Sanford, Fuqua

[11/12] Class 11: Resume and Cover Letter Workshopping

Class:

- Workshop resumes and cover letters in small groups

HW (Due 11/26):

- Individual case study readings as assigned
- Prepare presentation based on reading

[11/19] Class 12: Nonprofit and Think Tanks

Guest Speaker(s): TBA

[11/26] Class 13: Turning an Internship Into a Job

Class:

- Overview of professional success
- Present individual readings from assignment and discuss each case

HW (Due: 12/3):

- Apply for an internship

[12/3] Class 14: Wrap Up

Class:

- Headshot
- Concluding discussion