

# Political Science 181

## Fall 2005

### FIELD WORK IN POLITICS

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The political science internship gives students an opportunity to make practical application of what they've learned in classes. Most of the work for the course is done with the placement, but written work, individual consultations with the director and some reading are required to ensure that students make analytical connections between classroom and textbook abstractions about politics and the real thing.

By university policy, grading is credit/no credit. Credit is awarded **only** on completion of **all** (every one) of the requirements for the course, including resume, background research on the placement, weekly hours, contract, research design, attendance at class sessions, regular consultation with the director and a paper.

Initially, students prepare a brief **resume** to present to the director and the potential placement. This should include major, relevant courses taken, grade point average, work experience, volunteer activity, etc.

Interns then discuss placements with the director, who will assist in providing contacts for students who have not already arranged a placement for themselves.

Next, students do research on their potential placement and prepare a one-page **background report**. Internet research should suffice for this brief report, which should provide basic background on the placement. In the case of an elected official, this should include partisan affiliation, date of first and next election, constituency data, committee memberships, etc.

On completion of the resume and background research, students contact their placement, make an appointment and go for an **interview**. If accepted by the placement, the intern and the placement supervisor agree on duties and a work schedule on the contract form available from the director. This should include weekly hours and a starting and ending date providing for a total of 150 hours. **Contracts must be submitted to the director by September 12.**

Interns are required to record their work hours, activities and observations **monthly** in a one or two page **summary**. The summaries must be submitted to the intern director by email or in person **by the end of September, October and November.**

Each student must **meet with the director** individually once a month (September, October, November) to explain internship activities and discuss any problems that may arise. One of these meetings may occur at the placement when the instructor comes for a visit. Appointments for these consultations should be made when the contract is submitted.

A **research design** stating what students hope to learn and observe is **due at our October 10 class meeting**. Try to develop one or more hypotheses that can be tested through the internship experience. These should be based on expectations derived from your previous study of the type of politics you will be observing (elected officials, interest groups, bureaucracies, campaigns, etc.). The research design sets guidelines for the end-of-semester paper and should be as scholarly and analytical as possible. Minimally, your research design must set forth some questions about politics **and** how you will answer them through your internship.

Your **paper** for the course will be **due on December 6**. This 10-page paper should review, analyze and criticize the field work experience. Normally, copies are sent to the placements.

## READINGS

- Johnson & Joslyn, "Political Science Research Methods: Observation," (handout).
- Bollens & Marshall, "A Guide to Participation: Choosing a Topic," (handout).
- *The San Jose Mercury News* or another daily newspaper. Be sure to read "Internal Affairs" each Sunday.
- *Metro* (weekly). Be sure to read "The Fly" each week.
- Larry N. Gerston & Terry Christensen, *California Government and Politics*.
- Other readings appropriate to individual placements as suggested by the instructor.

## CLASS MEETINGS

August 29	Introductory Session: required only for students who are still seeking placements.
September 12	Second Session. <b>Contracts due.</b> Discuss placements, Johnson & Joslyn's "Observation," and Bollens & Marshall's "Choosing a Topic."
October 10	Third Session. <b>Research designs due.</b> Discuss activities at placements and research designs.
November 7	Fourth Session. Discuss activities at placements and papers.
December 5	Fifth and Final Class Session. <b>Papers due to instructor.</b>