

**PLCY 293: Internship in Public Policy (3 credits)**  
**Department of Public Policy, UNC-Chapel Hill**  
**Fall 2017**

**INSTRUCTOR**

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Office hours: TBD

**Course Description**

This course offers students an opportunity to reflect upon and enhance their internship experience. With the completion of assignments in parallel with an external internship, public policy students receive a total of 3 hours of academic credit. The external internship must be designed to allow the student to do policy-relevant research, policy analysis, program evaluation, and/or policy advocacy under the supervision of a mentor at a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or governmental organization (students will *not* receive credit for any partisan or campaign-based internship, regardless of their duties).

**Course Enrollment**

- Requires instructor permission. PLCY majors and minors only.
- Pre-requisite courses: None.
- Students must complete a learning contract for the course before the first day of their internship or by the last day of course registration for the semester (whichever is first).
- PLCY 293 counts as an Experiential Education course in UNC's General Education Requirements, but does not count as a field elective toward the Public Policy major or minor.

**Course Goals**

In this course, you will:

- gain first-hand experience in policy research and analysis
- deepen your knowledge of a particular issue area or aspect of Public Policy
- develop writing, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills in a real-world policy environment
- set personal and professional goals and reflect on your progress toward those goals
- explore Public Policy career options

**Course Requirements**

To pass this course, you must:

- complete a minimum of 112 hours of work experience at your internship site, including 96 hours of non-clerical work (e.g., 8 hours/week for 14 weeks)
- develop and carry out a plan of work that will contribute to your academic and professional development
- complete a variety of written and oral reflections on your internship experience
- develop a portfolio of materials that reflects your achievements during your internship experience

## Recommended Reading

All students are encouraged to read the following:

- Mintrom, M. (2003). *People skills for policy analysts*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. (On reserve at the Undergraduate Library)
- Hart Research Associates. (2015). Falling short? College learning and career success: Selected findings from online surveys of employers and college students conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges & Universities. Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/leap/public-opinion-research/2015-survey-results>.
- Fabris, C. (2015, Jan. 20). College students think they're ready for the workforce. Employers aren't so sure. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/article/College-Students-Think/151289/>.

## Course Assignments

*Submit all written assignments via Sakai. You must also submit a hard copy of your Internship Portfolio.*

### Internship Learning Contract

*Due before the first day of your internship or by the last day of course registration for the semester (Aug. 28), whichever is first.*

The learning contract serves as an agreement between the instructor, the student, and the Internship Supervisor. As part of this learning contract, you will submit a work plan that explains how you will tailor your internship experience to your goals. You should update this work plan as necessary during your internship, submitting changes to your instructor.

### Experience and Professional Conduct

You are expected to complete a minimum of 112 hours of work experience (e.g., 8 hours/week for 14 weeks) at your internship site. No more than 15% of this time may be devoted to clerical work (e.g., photocopying) or data entry. In other words, at least 96 hours must be devoted to non-clerical work. You must keep an hourly work log, to be signed by the Internship Supervisor and included in the Internship Portfolio (see below). **Note: failure to document 112 hours of work experience will result in a failing grade in the course.**

You should behave in a professional manner at all times during your internship, including in written assignments and in oral presentations. You should cultivate the following skills, habits, and characteristics.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Punctuality and attendance | • Assuming responsibility for actions                            |
| • Flexibility                | • Integrity  |
| • Dependability              | • Work organization  |
| • Meeting deadlines          | • Using humor appropriately                                      |
| • Handling stress with poise | • Soliciting and accepting written or verbal feedback gracefully |
| • Respecting self and others |  |

### **Instructor Meetings and Communication**

You are required to meet with the instructor three times during the semester, including meetings with other students in the course (times TBD). These meetings are a chance to discuss your ongoing internship experience, refine your goals, relate your internship to your academic experiences and goals, and discuss future plans. You are also expected to maintain regular contact with the instructor, notifying the instructor immediately of any developments that might hinder or prevent you from completing your internship.

### **Journal Entries**

*Due Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct. 6, Oct. 18, Nov. 3, and Nov. 17.*

Reflection helps you process and critically assess what you are seeing and doing as part of your internship experience. You are required to submit (via Sakai) 5 journal entries. Journal entries should be 500-750 words. See suggested prompts below. You will post at least 2 of these entries to the designated public forum on Sakai; choose entries that are appropriate for dissemination to the class and may be of interest to other students. Post the first shared entry by Sept. 22. By Oct. 6, comment on at least 1 entry by another student. *Students completing internships over the summer should complete their journal entries during their internship but may submit them by deadlines listed above.*

### **Presentation to class and at Experiential Education Showcase**

*Class presentation: date TBD; EE Showcase: Nov. 29 (tentative)*

At the end of the semester, you will give a brief (5-minute) presentation to your classmates about your work as an intern. In addition, unless you have a documented class conflict, you will attend the department's Experiential Education Showcase, where you will speak to students and visitors (including your Internship Supervisor) about your internship experience. For the Showcase, you will submit a photo and brief narrative description of your internship. This description will be used on the UNC Public Policy website and included in a poster with other interns' work.

### **Supervisor Evaluation**

*Due Dec. 6, 2017*

Your Internship Supervisor will evaluate your performance as an intern, including your professionalism, maturity, and ethical behavior; your completion of assigned tasks; your ability to work independently and as part of a team; and your demonstrated writing, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills. This written evaluation (on letterhead and signed) should be submitted via email to the PLCY 293 instructor ([annakl@email.unc.edu](mailto:annakl@email.unc.edu)).

### **Internship Portfolio**

*Due Dec. 8, 2017*

The Internship Portfolio is a compilation of your work throughout your internship, as well as your final thoughts on your experience. Portfolios should be submitted via Sakai and in hard copy. See detailed Internship Portfolio guidelines below.

## Course Grades

This course is graded on a pass/fail basis. The course grade will be determined by the following components. *Note: Failure to document 112 hours of work experience will result in a failing grade in the course. Late assignments will be assessed a 10% penalty for each day.*

- Professional conduct, including attendance at instructor meetings: 10%
- Journal Entries: 30%
- Presentation: 10%
- Internship Supervisor's Evaluation: 10%
- Internship Portfolio: 40%

Writing and public speaking are essential to success in public policy analysis. The following principles will be considered in evaluating both written and oral assignments:

Excellent	Makes creative and insightful contributions that demonstrate original thought, thorough research, a strong grasp of necessary skills and concepts; writes or speaks fluidly and concisely; consummately professional in all interactions; takes the initiative and uses feedback to improve.	A	94-100%
		A-	90-93%
Strong	Makes authoritative but conventional contributions that demonstrate adequate research; writing and thinking are reasonably clear; responds well to feedback.	B+	87-89%
		B	84-86%
		B-	80-83%
Adequate	Makes superficial contributions that demonstrate limited scope or insight of issues; may not respond to feedback.	C+	77-79%
		C	74-76%
		C-	70-73%
Inadequate	Fails to participate in a meaningful way; contributions are garbled, confused, or disjointed and demonstrate limited understanding of necessary skills and concepts	D+	67-70%
		D	60-66%
Unacceptable	Does not meet course requirements or fails to participate; contributions are incoherent and demonstrate lack of understanding of central concepts.	F	<60%

### Grade appeals

I take the evaluation and grading of your work very seriously because I know that most of you take your courses very seriously. If you think you deserve a higher grade on an assignment, you must wait at least 24 hours before speaking to your instructor about your grade. In this time period, you should review the assignment instructions, your work, and my feedback. To request a meeting to discuss your grade, you must write a brief letter (email is okay) to explain why you would like to appeal the grade. After I receive your letter, I will re-read your paper within a week and we will meet to discuss your concerns.

Depending on my re-reading, your grade may stay the same, be raised, or be lowered. This system is designed to minimize frivolous grade appeals and to ensure that you have carefully examined and reflected on the quality of your work before deciding to initiate a grade appeal.

## Journal Entries: Suggested Prompts

During an internship, you discover your skills, values, strengths, and interests. Reflecting on these discoveries adds intention to your career exploration and can guide your future decisions. Journal entries also offer a chance to integrate lessons from your internship experience, previous courses, and work/community service experiences. For each of your required journal entries, consider one or more of the following prompts; policies marked with an asterisk are required topics.

- **Prior Experience:** What prior academic knowledge or experience did you bring to this internship? What other prior life experiences (community service, jobs, etc.) have prepared you for this position? Are you using your skills or knowledge in unexpected ways? What academic knowledge or other experiences might make you more effective in this position?
- **Feedback:** What kinds of feedback would be useful for you in this internship? How can you (or have you) solicit this feedback? What's your plan for responding gracefully to feedback, evaluating its merits, and applying it to your work?
- **Workplace:** What are your observations on employee satisfaction and productivity? What do people seem to expect of you? How well are you communicating with personnel at your site?
- **Career Pathways:** Talk to people working for your organization. What were their first work experiences in the field? How did their careers progress? What skills are required for leadership in this organization? How are your expectations about the working world changing as a result of your internship?
- **Organizational Structure:** How are staff and projects organized in your organization? Is the organizational structure hierarchical or not? Who are the leaders of your organization? Who manages day-to-day operations? What are the roles and responsibilities of key individuals?
- **Problem Solving:** How are projects run in your organization (e.g., by individuals, by teams)? When problems occur, how are they solved? When successes occur, how are people in the organization credited for their work?
- **Accomplishments:** What have been your greatest accomplishments or successes? What did you learn from those accomplishments or successes?
- **Challenges:** What have you found most challenging about this internship? What setbacks have you experienced? What have you learned from those setbacks?
- **\*Personal Strengths and Weakness:** How have you applied or improved skills you already had? What new skills have you learned? What did you discover are your greatest strengths or skills? What did you discover are your weakness? Overall, what impact did this experience have on your personal growth?
- **\*Public Policy in Action:** What public policy issues are relevant to your organization's work? How does your organization seek to engage with these issues—through research, education, advocacy, etc.?
- **Internships as Policy:** UNC's General Education requirements include an experiential learning course. From a policy perspective, is this a valuable requirement? Why or why not? UNC recognizes several kinds of experiential education (refer to the "Connections" component of the curriculum at [curricula.unc.edu](http://curricula.unc.edu)). Are some kinds of experiential learning more useful than others?

## Internship Portfolio

The Internship Portfolio allows you to reflect upon your experiences, and it provides future employers with evidence of your work experience. In particular, the portfolio is designed to help you:

- Assess your learning
- Connect your experiences with your academic knowledge
- Consider your future endeavors
- Provide evidence of your skills

Assemble your portfolio in the following order:

1. Cover page. Include your name, course number (PLCY 293), semester, internship placement, and name of internship supervisor.
2. Table of contents with page and/or section numbers.
3. Introductory essay (300-500 words) that addresses the following points:
  - a. Why you selected this particular internship.
  - b. A brief description of your organization.
  - c. A list of your duties and responsibilities, including any comments on ways that your work diverged from your original work plan.
4. At least 3 samples of your work, each preceded by a brief explanation of the activity the item documents. Materials might include memos, reports, brochures, agendas, proposals, crucial email messages, or database summaries.
5. Final Reflective Essay (2,000-2,500 words). This essay need not have a thesis, but it should be well organized and well written, with a coherent narrative or consistent themes. For this essay, revisit your journal entries and consider these additional questions:
  - a. *What?* What was the purpose of your internship? What is the mission or goal of the organization you worked with? What was your role?
  - b. *So What?* Why is this important? Why should others care about this organization? Why was the work you accomplished important? Why will it help others? Is there a social impact? Is this directly related to a certain population?
  - c. *Now What?* What happens now? Where do you go from here? What happens to the policy work that you assisted with? What happens to the population you were focusing on? How might this experience impact your future?
6. Your updated resume, reflecting your newly completed internship.
7. Hourly work log, signed by your Internship Supervisor.

## University Resources and Policies

### Honor Code

As a UNC student, you are bound by the Honor Code, suspected violations of which are adjudicated by the student-led Honor System. You can find the “Instrument of Student Judicial Governance” and other information at [studentconduct.unc.edu](http://studentconduct.unc.edu). It is your responsibility (as it is ours) to understand and uphold the ideals of honor and integrity. I am happy to discuss any questions you have about specifics when it comes to particular assignments. For now, note that the Honor Code states:

*It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.*

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it at all costs. In written work (including slide decks or handouts used in presentations), words drawn from others should be indicated by quotation marks and ideas drawn from others should refer to their source. If you are unsure about what needs to be cited, please talk to me or ask for assistance from the Writing Center. Plagiarism is a serious offense which can result in failure of the course and suspension from the University. To make sure that you understand what plagiarism is, please read

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>. Also see the following link for an engaging animated tutorial on plagiarism: <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/>.

### Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Misconduct

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students. University policy states that any form of violence or harassment, including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking is unwelcome at the University. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate UNC resource at [eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/](http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/). **Please note that if you have any concerns about discrimination or harassment at your internship site, you should contact me immediately.**

### Accessibility Resources & Service

The office of Accessibility Resource & Service provides services and reasonable accommodations to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate/professional students with disabilities. Their mission is to provide students with disabilities equal access to the services, programs and activities of the University so that they may, as independently as possible, meet the demands of University life. ARS can be reached at SASB (student and academic Services Building), Suite 2126, 450 Ridge Road, 919-962-8300 or [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu). For more information see: <http://accessibility.unc.edu/>.