

**PLCY 293: Internship in Public Policy (3 credits)**  
**Department of Public Policy, UNC-Chapel Hill**  
**Fall 2022**

**INSTRUCTOR**

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**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 (pass/fail). 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: At least one PLCY course.
- 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 it does not count as a field elective toward the Public Policy major or minor.

**Course Goals**

According to O'Neill (2010), "an internship is more likely be 'high impact' for students when it is intentionally organized as an activity that leads to particular learning outcomes; when students apply what they have learned in courses to work experiences, reflect on these experiences, and receive feedback that helps them to improve; when students build mentoring relationships with supervisors, faculty, and peers; when students are exposed to differences across people and in ways of thinking; and when students are asked to use their experiences to clarify their values, interests, and personal goals—including, in this case, their values, interests, and goals related to careers." Accordingly, in this course, you will:

- set personal and professional goals, reflect on your progress toward those goals, and seek and respond to feedback
- gain first-hand experience in policy research, analysis, or advocacy
- deepen your knowledge of a particular issue area or aspect of public policy, building on previous academic coursework
- hone writing, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills in a real-world policy environment
- explore career options in public policy and build mentoring relationships with public policy professionals

## General Education Learning Objectives

This course fulfills the “High Impact Experience” requirement in the IDEAs in Action curriculum. In High Impact Experiences, students enrich and expand their academic study by engaging in compelling applied experiences that transform their learning.

Questions to keep in mind during the course:

1. How do things I’ve learned in the classroom apply to outside settings?
2. How can experiences and observation raise or answer questions in academic settings?
3. How can I meaningfully reflect to help navigate complexities and ambiguities I encounter?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the connections between academic studies and outside-the-classroom experiences and observations.
2. Apply knowledge in complex or ambiguous situations.
3. Develop questions from experiences and observations to deepen and extend academic inquiry.

## Course Requirements

To pass this course, you must:

- complete a minimum of 120 hours of work experience at your internship site, including 100 hours of non-clerical work (e.g., 8 hours/week for 15 weeks)
- develop and carry out a plan of work that will contribute to your academic and professional development
- participate in meetings with your peers and the instructor
- complete written and oral reflections on your internship experience, including journal entries, an oral presentation, and a final reflective essay
- develop a portfolio of materials that reflects your achievements during your internship experience

## Recommended Reading

All students are encouraged to read the following (on reserve at the UL or posted on Sakai’s Course Reserves)

- 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.
- Kilgo, C. A., Ezell Sheets, J. K., & Pascarella, E. T. (2015). The Link between High-Impact Practices and Student Learning: Some Longitudinal Evidence. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 69(4), 509-525.
- O’Neill, N. (2010). Internships as a high-impact practice: Some reflections on quality. *Peer Review*, 12(4), 4-8.
- Mintrom, M. (2003). *People skills for policy analysts*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

## 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 (August 19, 2022), 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 120 hours of work experience (e.g., 8 hours/week for 15 weeks) at your internship site. No more than 20 hours may be devoted to clerical work (e.g., photocopying) or data entry. In other words, at least 100 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 template on Sakai). **Note: failure to document 120 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
- Integrity
- Dependability
- Flexibility
- Meeting deadlines
- Handling stress with poise
- Assuming responsibility for actions
- Respecting self and others
- Work organization
- Using humor appropriately
- Soliciting and accepting written or verbal feedback gracefully

### Instructor Meetings and Communication

**You are 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.** You are also required to schedule 3 meetings with instructor throughout the semester. 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 must schedule one meeting during *each* of the following weeks:

- Week 1: Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>
- Week 8: Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> – Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>
- Week 14: Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> – Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>

### Journal Entries

*Due Aug. 26, Sept. 9, Sept. 23, Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov. 4, and Nov. 18. (Students completing internships over the summer should refer to due dates on Sakai.)*

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) 7 journal entries. Journal entries should be 500-750 words. See required and suggested prompts below; note that some due dates require you to answer particular prompts. 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. 10 and the second by Oct. 8. Brief comments on at least 1 entry by another student are due by Sept. 13 and Nov. 12.

### **Oral Presentations**

*Class presentation:* **November 29;**

At the end of the semester, you will give a brief (5-minute) presentation with visual aids (slides or handouts) to your classmates about your work as an intern.

### **Supervisor Evaluation**

*Supervisor's evaluation form and letter due* **November 30**

Your Internship Supervisor is a crucial resource for you in providing feedback about how you are meeting the organization's expectations as well as your own learning goals for the internship. In addition to informal feedback you receive, you should request more formal feedback at least once mid-way through your internship. You can ask your supervisor to provide feedback on:

- your professionalism, maturity, and ethical behavior;
- your completion of assigned tasks in a timely fashion;
- your ability to work independently and as part of a team;
- and your demonstrated writing, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.

At the end of your internship, your Internship Supervisor will evaluate your performance as an intern via an evaluation form and a letter. You should share the form (available on Sakai) with your supervisor and ask them to submit the completed materials via email to the PLCY 293 instructor ([danielg@email.unc.edu](mailto:danielg@email.unc.edu)). You should also request a final meeting to discuss your overall performance and progress toward your learning goals.

### **Internship Portfolio**

*Due* **Dec 30**

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 120 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 course meetings: 10%
- Journal Entries: 35%
- Presentation: 10%
- Internship Supervisor's Evaluation: 10%
- Internship Portfolio: 35%

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 contacting me 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 assignment 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

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. The first four prompts are:

- **Journal Entry 1: Prior Experience and New Goals:** Revisit your proposed plan of work. What specific goals do you have for your internship experience? What prior academic knowledge or experience did you bring to this internship? What other prior life experiences (jobs, community service, etc.) have prepared you for this position? So far, have you applied or improved skills you already had, or used your knowledge in unexpected ways? What new skills have you learned? What academic knowledge or other experiences might make you more effective in this position?
- **Journal Entry 2: Public Policy in Action:** What public policy issues are relevant to your organization's work? How do history and politics shape your organization's work in this field? How does your organization seek to engage with these issues—through research, education, advocacy, etc.? How does your organization interact with other stakeholders in this policy area?
- **Journal Entry 3: Feedback, Strengths, and Weaknesses:** What have you discovered are your greatest strengths or skills? Your weaknesses? What kinds of feedback would be useful for you in this internship? How can you solicit this feedback? What's your plan for responding gracefully to feedback, evaluating its merits, and applying it to your work?
- **Journal Entry 4: Applied Scholarship:** Describe 1-2 scholarly articles, such as assigned readings from previous courses, that are relevant to your internship or organization. What insight do these article(s) give you into the practicalities of your organization or policy area? How has your internship experience enhanced or modified your understanding of these article(s)?

For each of your remaining journal entries, choose one of the following prompts to address:

- **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 does work in this organization or field align with your interests, goals, and values? How are your expectations about the working world changing as a result of your internship?
- **Organizational Structure and Problem Solving:** How are staff and projects organized in your organization (e.g., by individuals, by teams)? Is the organizational structure hierarchical or not? When problems occur, how are they solved? When successes occur, how are people in the organization credited for their work?
- **Accomplishments and Challenges:** What have been your greatest accomplishments or successes? What did you learn from those accomplishments or successes? What complex or ambiguous situations have you encountered, and how have you dealt with them? What have you found most challenging about this internship? What setbacks have you experienced? What have you learned from those setbacks?
- **Internships as Policy:** Read "Falling short? College learning and career success" (Hart Research Associates, 2015). Given the conclusions of this report, is the requirement to take an experiential

learning course (part of UNC's General Education requirements; see "Connections" component at [curricula.unc.edu](http://curricula.unc.edu)) necessary and/or valuable? Why or why not? 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 internship experiences with your academic knowledge
- Deepen your learning by developing
- Provide evidence of your skills
- Consider your future endeavors

Assemble your portfolio in the following order:

1. **Cover page.** Include your name, course number (PLCY 293), semester, host organization, 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 host organization.
  - c. A list of your duties and responsibilities, including any comments on ways that your work diverged from your original work plan.
4. **Your resume**, updated to reflect your newly completed internship.
5. **Hourly work log**, signed by your Internship Supervisor.
6. **At least 3 substantive examples 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.
7. **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, re-read your journal entries, then address the questions below. Feel free to use section headers to break up your essay, but do not simply respond to one question at a time.
  - a. *What?* What is the mission or goal of the organization you worked with? What populations or sub-groups are most affected by the organization's work? What was the purpose of your internship and your role within the organization?
  - b. *So What?* How has your work contributed to the organization's mission? How was the work you accomplished important or helpful to others? What did you learn from notable successes or failures? How has your experience affected the way you view the policy issues you worked on? What have you learned about applied policy analysis in general?
  - c. *Now What?* Will your work have an impact on policy? What happens to the policy issue or population you were focusing on? How might this internship experience shape your future? What are *your* next steps in learning about or working in this policy area? What questions are you left with? How do you plan to address those questions?



## University Resources and Policies

### UNC Honor Code and Academic Honesty

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). All suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor System. It is your responsibility (as it is mine) to understand and uphold the ideals of honor and integrity, including reporting any instance in which reasonable grounds exist to believe that a student has received unauthorized aid in graded work or in other respects violated the Honor Code. 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.*

All academic work submitted in this course must be your own. It is your responsibility, if you have any doubt, to confirm whether or not collaboration is permitted. Similarly, it is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it at all costs.

In written work, 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 with 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/>.

### UNC Policy addressing Discrimination and Harassment

Acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are [prohibited](#) at UNC-Chapel Hill. If you have experienced these types of conduct, you are encouraged to report the incident and seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance / Title IX Coordinator (Adrienne Allison, [adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators (Ew Quimbaya-Winship, [eqw@unc.edu](mailto:eqw@unc.edu); Rebecca Gibson, [rmgibson@unc.edu](mailto:rmgibson@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPs) (confidential) in Campus Health Services at (919) 966-3658, or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (confidential) (Cassidy Johnson, [cassidyjohnson@unc.edu](mailto:cassidyjohnson@unc.edu); Holly Lovern, [holly.lovern@unc.edu](mailto:holly.lovern@unc.edu)) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

### Accessibility Resources & Service

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing

learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information ([ars.unc.edu](https://ars.unc.edu)) or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu). Relevant policy documents as they relate to registration and accommodations determinations and the student registration form are available on the [ARS website under the About ARS tab](#).