

Fall 2026 Internship Assignment: Political Science 497

Part of the experience of completing an internship is to gain work experience that prepares you for your chosen profession. Likewise, bridging this practical experience with an "educational" component is where your readings and papers come in.

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Office Hours: By appointment only

Deadlines

Paper and journal due date: **Friday, December 11, 2026 by 4pm** by email to relgar@wsu.edu. **The supervisor evaluations are also due on the same date. You are responsible for making sure that these are sent to me in time by email.**

Required text (supplement with **at least 5-10** recent journal articles depending on the length of your paper):

Kingdon, John. (2011). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Policies, Second Edition*. Longman.

Journal articles

You should use scholarly articles, in peer-reviewed journals, to support the points you make in your paper. Using Google Scholar, and the WSU libraries, will be of great help to you. If you have any questions about finding suitable articles to use, please contact me. Newspaper articles can be included to add color, but are not to substitute peer-reviewed articles.

Assignment

You have one major paper and a journal to write for this class:

Paper Topic: Policy Analysis

You will write a paper of the length indicated below in the credit option section. Your paper should be in Times New Roman using size 12 font, double-spaced with standard one-inch margins.

Select a public policy topic that is of personal interest to you at the state or federal level. Some examples include (but are not limited to): health care reform; Social Security reform; civil partnerships; carbon trading; etc. The topic you choose is your decision (with my approval) but it must have been (or is currently) under serious consideration. The paper should include the following stages, which are all described in the John Kingdon book:

- a. **Policy agenda:** How did this problem become part of the government agenda? What role did linkage institutions such as public opinion, the media, political parties, elections, or interest groups play in putting this issue on the agenda?
- b. **Policy formation:** How did the proposed policy address the public problem? In other words, what would this policy do or what was it supposed to do? How was it formulated and by whom?

- c. **Policy adoption:** Describe the politics surrounding the consideration of this policy. Who were the key actors (legislators, interest groups, agency officials, etc.) involved in determining whether the policy was adopted or was not adopted? What role did other factors such as public opinion and the political environment play in the outcome?
- d. **Policy implementation and impact:** If the policy was adopted, how was it carried out, and what is its likely effect on society? If the policy was not adopted, what are some of the potential consequences of its failure on society?

You are encouraged to express your own opinions in the conclusion, but the assignment - your assessment of a policy - is to be as objective as possible. Do not write an editorial or diatribe slamming the President, Congress, the Republicans, or Democrats. I know this can be tempting and fun but resist it in your academic paper. Write the paper as a neutral social scientist trying to explain and analyze why a certain policy was/was not adopted and why politics and institutions shaped that particular solution to a problem.

Base your paper on the assigned readings, other professional or scholarly journals, and newspaper articles only if you wish to add some background information. **Proper citations are a must.** You should use in-text citations in parentheses by (author year: page number). For example, if you cite some text by John Kingdon, or use examples based on the text do it like this: **(Kingdon 2003: 17)**, after the text or idea that you have used. If you are using a general idea from the text, you do not need to list the page number. List **every** source that you have used in the bibliography. Please submit your papers electronically.

The paper must have **at least** five sources. Use the Kingdon book plus **at least** 4 other sources. Give yourself enough time to read the texts before the paper is due! Possible other sources should include academic articles, many of which you can find by using the WSU Library search option, or through using Google Scholar. Some use of government publications is also acceptable, but you must mostly use academic sources.

When using internet sources take great care in citing and determining that they are legitimate and credible. You may use government websites, "think-tank" sources, and news media outlets, but make sure you cite them correctly so that I can check them if necessary.

Papers are graded primarily on the content, but style, grammar, and form will count. Carefully proof and edit your paper. Include a title page, and make sure that you introduce your topic and its importance, present your analysis **using the sources**, and provide a conclusion.

In the **bibliography**, list all of your sources completely. All ideas and quotes taken from the sources **must** be cited. **Failure to do so is plagiarism and can result in a failure on the paper, class, and academic expulsion from the University.**

The paper length **does not** include the title or reference pages.

Journal

In addition to your paper you must also write a five (5) page journal about your internship experience. The journal should be typed in Times New Roman using size 12 font, double-spaced with standard one-inch margins.

Your journal can include:

- ~ A description of the daily tasks you performed and highlight significant learning experiences. Please do not recount a daily log of what you did - make it a narrative;
- ~ Your thoughts, perceptions, what you learned, an evaluation of the internship experience;
- ~ Plans for the future. Did the internship help you professionally?

Credit option

- ~ If you register for three (3) credits, you are required to complete an eight (8) page paper with at least 5 academic sources and five (5) page journal.
- ~ If you register for six (6) credits you are required to complete a twelve (12) page paper with at least 7 academic sources and five (5) page journal.
- ~ If you register for nine (9) credits you are required to complete a fifteen (15) page paper with at least 9 academic sources and a five (5) page journal.
- ~ If you register for twelve (12) credits you are required to complete a twenty (20) page paper with at least 10 academic sources and a five (5) page journal.

This is a pass/fail course. You must successfully complete the practical portion of your internship (i.e., the actual working with an employer), as well as the academic component of the internship (i.e., paper, journal, and evaluation turned in complete and on time) in order to receive a passing grade.

If for some reason you are unable to complete the practical portion of their internship, or if you are fired or removed from your position as an intern, you will automatically receive a failing grade.

The academic and practical portions of the internship will be weighted equally in the decision to assign a passing or a failing grade. You must demonstrate satisfactory completion of both the academic and practical components of an internship to receive a passing grade. If you do not complete or turn in the academic portion of the internship on time and in full, then you will receive a failing grade. If you are deemed to have completed unsatisfactory work for the agency you are interning with, then you may be assigned a failing grade.

If you have any problems at your workplace please notify me AND your supervisor (at the internship) as soon as possible.

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; ☎ 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.