Course Description
Welcome to Inside Washington: Politics and Policy. During this semester, we will review the institutions of American government and a number of public policies. These policies include economic and social policies such as the budget, immigration reform, gun control, education, health care, affirmative action, inequality, the death penalty, transgender rights, and climate change.

This course is designed as an experiential seminar with a focus on the politics and policies in the national policymaking process. Your informed input is extremely important. You are expected to contribute to our class discussion and to carefully follow the arguments presented by our guest speakers. The assigned readings will complement our visits and will be useful during our discussions with public policy experts.

Learning Outcomes
Upon completing this course, students will be able to:
- Identify the justification for government action on public policy issues, and analyze the importance of government institutions and processes
- Analyze the politics of public policy decision making and the pros and cons of different policy options
- Evaluate theories related to the public policy process
- Apply an understanding of the public policy process to a specific policy issue
- Engage thoughtfully with public policy experts
- Develop written communication skills by completing short papers, a memo and a final exam

Required Texts and Materials
All reading material will be sent to you.
Course Requirements

Attendance, Speaker Questions, Attentiveness, Short Class Presentations (13% of final grade)
This part of your grade is based on the following:

1. Attendance
2. Attentiveness
3. Speaker questions
4. Active engagement (two students present reactions to the readings)

In class and during visits from speakers, you should refrain from:

- Using your phone or your laptop
- Texting
- Doing other work not related to the class
- Having a side conversation with a classmate
- Interrupting a speaker or a classmate, or speaking out of turn
- Otherwise being inattentive

Inconsiderate behavior as detailed above will result in a 3-point penalty per incident from your final participation grade. You will be given one warning before I begin to deduct points.

Weekly Reaction Papers (16% of final grade; 8 papers at 2% each)
A one-page (250 words) typed reaction paper is due each week. These papers are based on the readings. You will write about one idea in the readings that you found interesting. Your paper must include one main idea and use evidence from the readings to support your idea.

Your paper is due each week by noon on the Monday before class. Late papers are not accepted. If you miss the class (excused absence), your paper is due by noon on Monday before class.

Debriefing on Guest Speaker (16% of the final grade; 8 papers at 2% each)
A one-page (250 words) typed reaction to our speaker is due on each guest speaker. These reaction papers must include your opinion on the material presented by the speaker. You must also cite specific evidence presented by the speaker. Your paper is due each week by noon on the Friday after we meet with the speaker. Late papers are not accepted. If you miss the class (excused absence), I will give you an alternate assignment.

Site Visits (9% of final grade; 3 visits at 3% each)
You will visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Congress, and the Pentagon.

Movie: “All the President's Men” (10%)
Question: Compare the actions/behavior of Richard Nixon to the actions/behavior of Donald Trump. Did Trump commit an impeachable offense? Use evidence from the movie to support your position.
**Decision Making Memo (18%)**
You will write a two-page decision making memo. I will give you a handout on this assignment. The memo is due (emailed to me) on Monday, April 27th.

**Take-Home Final Exam (18%)**
Final Exam Due by 4 pm on Tuesday, April 28th (emailed to me).
The final exam is based on your readings, class discussions and the information we learn from speaker visits. The final exam will include three questions. The questions are based on three of the 10 topics that we will review during the semester. The exam will be emailed to you on Wednesday, April 22nd.

**Course Policies**

**Absences**
The courses offered through the Washington Internship Institute are integral to the academic internship program. These courses often feature site visits or guest speakers—one-of-a-kind opportunities that benefit students enormously. Because course meetings occur only once a week, missing a class has deleterious effects on the student’s progress and access to these opportunities in the course.

Attendance in class is mandatory. However, to accommodate the unexpected as well as the student’s internship experience, one excused absence is allowed. Excused absences include an absence due to illness, an emergency, or a mandatory event connected to their internship. Absences will only be considered excused if I am notified in advance or by the end of the scheduled class meeting time.

More than one excused absence will result in a 5-point deduction from the student’s final average. Each unexcused absence will result in a 5-point deduction from the student’s final grade. You will be marked absent if you leave class for long periods of time. There will be a 2.5-point deduction each time you skip a speaker visit.

**Late Assignments**
No late papers will be accepted, unless you make arrangements with me in advance.

**There are no Extra Credit Assignments**

**Academic Honesty**
If you copy any part of your final paper without attribution, I will refer the paper to the Washington Internship Institute staff. All members of this academic community are expected to abide by ethical standards, both in their conduct and in their exercise of responsibilities toward other members of the community. I expect students to understand and adhere to basic standards of honesty and academic integrity. These standards include: 1. Papers and assignments prepared independently. Students never represent the ideas or the language of others as their own; 2. Students neither give nor receive assistance with examinations; 3. Students do not represent work completed for one course as original work for another or deliberately disregard course rules and regulations.

**Cell Phones**
Please make sure that your cell phone is turned off during our class meetings. If you are waiting for an important call, please turn your phone to silent and exit the room quietly to take this call.
Computers
The use of computers is not permitted in our class, when we host speakers, or visit organizations.

Students with Disabilities
If you need special accommodations to help you with this course or transportation to field visits, I encourage you to come talk to me. I want to make this course accessible to everyone.

Grade Scale

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Course Schedule

Week 1, Tuesday, January 21st: Introduction
Introduction and Course Overview
Student Introductions
Take the Political Ideology Quiz

Week 2, Tuesday, January 28th: Contexts of Public Policy, How to Make American Politics Less Rotten
Listen: Ten Ideas to Make Politics Less Rotten:
Read: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/01/two-party-system-broke-constitution/604213/
Organization: New America
Address: 740 15th Street, NW, Suite 900

Week 3: Tuesday, February 4th: Visit Congress
1:30 pm: Take a tour
3:00 pm: Visit a Committee
Complete Worksheet

Week 4: Tuesday, February 11th: The Budget
Read: Chapter 1 in Cochran
Read: CQ Researcher, National Debt: Do Rising Annual Deficits Threaten the Economy?
Organization: The Hub Project
Address: 1920 L Street, NW, Suite 600

Week 5: Tuesday, February 18th: TBD

Week 6: Tuesday, February 25th: Movie: “All the President’s Men”
350-word essay question: Compare the actions/behavior of Richard Nixon to the actions/behavior of Donald Trump. Did Trump commit an impeachable offense? Use evidence from the movie to support your position.

Week 7: Tuesday, March 3rd: TBD
Week 8: Tuesday, March 10th: Visit the National Museum of African American History & Culture or the Holocaust Museum, Bible Museum, American History Museum
Complete worksheet
How do the events presented in the museum help us understand the past and the present? (250 words)
George F. Will's column on the Holocaust Museum
*A Showcase of the Vilest and Noblest Manifestation of Humanity*

Week 9: Tuesday, March 17th: TBD

Week 10: Tuesday, March 24th: TBD

Week 11: Tuesday, March 31st: Pentagon Visit

Week 12: Tuesday, April 7th: TBD

Week 13: Tuesday, April 14th: TBD
Present your memo topic in class.

Week 14: Tuesday, April 21st: TBD

Week 15: Tuesday, April 28th: Final Assignments Due
Final take-home exam emailed to students on Wednesday, April 22nd
Final take-home exam due Tuesday, April 28th
Final Memo Due: Monday, April 27th

Possible issues:

- Abortion
- Climate change
- Immigration reform
- Death penalty
- Gun control
- K-12 education reform
- Affirmative action
- Inequality
- Church-state relations
- Democracy decline
- Health care
- Legalization of marijuana
- Transgender rights
- Impeachment
- Trump Presidency and Democracy