

**Political Science 481: Political Science Legislative Internship**  
**Office of US Senator Daniel K. Akaka**  
**University of Hawai'i at Hilo**

Fall, 2009  
CRN# 12366  
15 Credits

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2:00pm – 4:30pm,  
and by appointment.

### **Course Overview**

The Legislative Internship in Political Science offers participating students an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge from the classroom to the real-world working of Congress. Placement for this internship program is in Washington, DC. The experiences and insights gained through applied, directed activities in Senator Akaka's office enrich the student's educational program. This internship program fosters positive relations between the university and the Senator's office, and students obtain skills, experiences and contacts that will enhance their employment prospects and options after graduation. Students are expected to work 40 hours per week for the duration of the semester as well as write a term paper.

Through this internship experience, student interns earn a total of 15 credits of PolS 481 toward graduation. *Grading for PolS 481 is Credit / No-Credit only.* Internship credits may be applied toward university upper-division course requirements and graduation requirements. It should be noted that no internship credits may be "double-counted" for purposes of satisfying more than one major's upper division requirements.

### **Eligibility for the Internship**

The Internship in Political Science is open only to a limited number of students. Through a specific application process involving the Political Science Faculty and the placement office, students are selected to participate. Eligibility criteria are determined by the program (Washington, DC), and applications are available from the instructor.

### **Course Requirements**

There are four requirements for this course:

#### **1. Statement of Internship Goals**

Students are required to develop a list of their goals for the internship, including both broad goals and the development of specific skills. This list of internship goals should be submitted to the instructor and your supervisor.

#### **2. Working at the Internship**

Always show up on time for your work and act professionally. Do not ask to leave early except in cases of emergency. If you do not know how to do something asked of you, get help from the intern coordinator and/or the legislative assistant that assigned the task to you. Sometimes you may get stuck doing something boring, but try to make the best of it. The more interest you show in the organization and what it does, the more likely you will be to receive more interesting work. Remember: you are representing the University when you are in an internship. If you fail to do a good job, you may cost the University a contact that would have otherwise provided opportunities for students in the future. On the flip side, doing a good job enhances the reputation of the University and can provide you with a good reference and enhanced job opportunities in the future. Be aware that ethical problems can arise in the workplace. Be sure to report any incidents of sexual harassment immediately to the intern coordinator, who will bring it to the attention of the Chief of Staff. Similarly, if you observe any unethical behavior in the organization, report it right away.

### **Living Arrangements**

Living accommodations must be arranged *prior* to arriving in Washington DC. Try to make your living arrangements as close to the Hart Senate office building as possible in order to avoid long commutes. We recommend Thompson-Markward Hall (for women) and Washington Intern Student Housing as they conform to

the unique needs of student interns in DC. If you choose to live some ways away from the office, realize that your commute is your own responsibility and is no excuse for not arriving on time and ready to work as scheduled.

#### **Ground transportation from Airport**

In the past, the Senator's office has been able to arrange transportation to your living accommodations when you first arrive in DC. This transportation is for metro Washington DC only. If you need to travel outside of the city, you will need to arrange your own transportation.

#### **Working on the job**

You must be prepared to work when you arrive in DC. This means having completed all necessary employment paperwork so that you can legally work for the US government. When you work for the Senator, you are representing the Senator himself, and whatever you do reflects directly on the Senator. Unprofessional and unethical behavior on your part will disgrace the Senator and will not be tolerated. You must show up on time and be prepared to work every day as scheduled. Do not check personal email, engage in video gaming, or do any personal web surfing while on the job.

#### **Financial Considerations**

The Senator's office generously provides a stipend to help support your work. The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of UH Hilo will provide a tuition stipend to help offset most of your tuition expenses (conditional on continued funding). Unfortunately, since Washington DC is an expensive area to live, this will be probably not be enough money, and you will need to have extra financial resources prior to arriving in DC. You cannot work a second job while employed at the internship.

#### **Sick days and Personal Time**

You will be in Washington DC for two reasons: to work and to learn. Any sightseeing or other personal activities must be done on your own time (after work or on the weekend). Sick days are for illness *only*. You are not to use sick days as personal time. If you take a sick day, you may be asked to provide evidence of illness, such as a doctor's note.

#### **Credit and Grading**

This is a full-time credit/no-credit course for 15 credits. You cannot take another class while involved in the internship. You must satisfactorily complete all of your work on the job as well as your academic work in order to receive credit for the course.

### **3. Monthly Contacts**

Student interns are required to schedule a monthly contact with the instructor as a means regular supervision and progress evaluation. This contact may be by phone or email.

### **4. Term Paper**

The point of the term paper is not to discuss the specific tasks you performed at your internship. Instead, you are discuss what you have learned about the legislative process beyond what you have already learned in your classes. The paper should be approximately 10 pages long. Choose an issue being addressed by Congress, and consider the following legislative aspects (among others that you may come up with) in writing your paper:

- The process of moving a specific piece of legislation through the legislature
- Budgeting
- Intergovernmental relations
- Interest groups and Think Tanks
- Public Opinion
- Mass media
- Implementation

Your paper does not necessarily require library research and text references, although you may find them helpful. You may need to interview your supervisor and/or other employees as part of your research. Additionally, many students find that keeping a weekly journal of their observations and activities helps in writing their term paper.

## Evaluation

The student internship grade will be based upon an evaluation provided by the supervisor, an evaluation conducted by the instructor, and the completion of a term paper as follows:

- 50% of grade: Term paper
- 40% of grade: Supervisor's evaluation
- 10% of grade: Instructor's evaluation

The instructor's evaluation of student performance will be guided by the following table:

Evaluation	Grade	Grade Points
Excellent	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
	C+	2.3
Satisfactory	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D	1.0
Failure	F	0.0

The Instructor will evaluate the intern's performance through contacts with the supervisor and intern that will include phone calls, emails and written communication. The supervisor will provide an evaluation by means of a standardized form that will consist of both open and closed ended questions that assess the performance of the student intern. Students will be permitted access to their supervisor's evaluation upon request.

## Other Course Policies and Notes:

### Academic Integrity Policy

Academic honesty is required of all students. Each student is responsible for understanding and following campus policies on academic honesty. Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend on the integrity of University courses and is a serious offense. The UHH Catalog defines academic dishonesty in the following way:

"Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; purchasing term papers; or drylabbing, which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, or fabricating data to fit the desired or expected results" (p. 66).

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Note that submitting the same paper for more than one course *without the prior approval of both instructors* is considered to be a case of academic dishonesty. You must use quotation marks ("these things") if you are directly copying another author's words. Simply citing the author is not enough unless you are paraphrasing (rewriting the idea in your own words). You are encouraged to paraphrase wherever possible, as it is preferable to using too many quotes.

If plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty (including cheating on examinations) is suspected, the incident will be thoroughly investigated. If you are caught cheating in any form or plagiarizing any part of a test, paper, or other assignment, you will receive an "F" for the course (not just the assignment) and may be reported to the University administration for further possible action, including expulsion from the university.

## **Course Outline**

**Begin Internship on or before August 24.**

**Week 3 (9/8).** Signed Internship Contracts due.

**Week 5 (9/21).** Term paper topics due.

**Week 10 (10/26).** Term paper outlines due.

**Finals Week (12/14).** Term papers due.

**End Internship on or after December 10.**