

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

The Fund for American Studies

Public Policy + International Affairs Internship Seminar

General Information

Course: **SECTION 2-Inside Washington Seminar: Outside Influences in the Policymaking Process, ECON 496**

Dates: Friday, March 21, 2025-April 18, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm; Van Metre Hall, Room TBD

Instructor: Professor Karen M. Czarnecki

Email: Primary: kcarnec@gmu.edu; Secondary: ProfessorCzarnecki@gmail.com (Please email both accounts for quickest response.)

Office hours: By Appointment. Please schedule in advance.

Professor Biography: Karen M. Czarnecki

Karen M. Czarnecki has spent over two decades in leadership roles in politics and public policy in Washington, DC. She is currently the Executive Director of a national research non-profit and spent over seven years as the Vice President of Outreach for the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. She also served as director of education at the Law and Economics Center at George Mason University's Scalia Law School. Her past roles include Congressional Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao (Director of the Office of the 21st Century Workforce; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Acting Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment.) For over a decade, she has been a regular lecturer for the Congressional Management Foundation and the Leadership Institute, and has volunteered for many Presidential, Gubernatorial and Congressional races. Czarnecki received her BA and JD degrees from The Catholic University of America and is an alumna of the TFAS Public Policy and Economics program.

Required Texts:

How Washington Really Works, by Charles Peters

Supplemental Materials:

- The instructor regularly supplements textbook readings with journal articles, book chapters, essays, and other material. It is the student's responsibility to consult Blackboard **weekly** for updated materials prior to each class.

Course Goals:

- To further an understanding of how Washington, DC, public policy works
- To develop writing and presentation skills applicable to your future careers
- To highlight current events in the context of internship experiences

Format:

- Subject matter lectures
- Readings
- Active discussion regarding class topics, internships, assigned readings
- Student group presentations illustrating class work, assigned readings, and research
- Homework assignments

Expectations:

- The instructor and students will act with the highest level of professional ethics, demonstrate a genuine interest in the subject matter at hand, and come to every class fully prepared to engage in the learning process.
- Students will complete all of the readings in advance of each class, and come to class ready to discuss their own experiences and insights regarding the lessons at hand.
- Students will adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code. Copying, cheating, or plagiarism will not be tolerated. This policy includes the use of generative AI.
- Students will attend all class sessions and participate in class discussions. Students who are unable to attend any particular class must, to the fullest extent practicable, inform the instructor of their pending absence in advance. The instructor will work to accommodate every student's situation, where appropriate, including unexpected family or personal challenges and unanticipated events (e.g. a death in the family, severe illness, hospitalization, etc.).
- Unless otherwise agreed upon by the instructor, students will submit all their assignments on time, prior to the beginning of each class via Blackboard. With rare exception, late assignments will be marked down a minimum of one full letter grade. Students are expected to proofread their written products for typos and grammatical errors, which if left unchecked, will result in a lower grade.
- The instructor will maintain an open-door policy and be available to field any questions, concerns, comments, etc. within a reasonable timeframe.
- Please note that in order to accommodate speaker schedules, some changes in class content may occur. The professor or TFAS staff will send out a note to students if there is a change in schedule.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: Once a final grade has been entered at the end of the semester, late work of any kind cannot be accepted.

Grading:

■ Class Attendance & Participation, including:	25%
○ Knowledge of readings	
○ Class Participation	
■ Written Papers	35%
■ Quizzes	10%
■ Group Presentations	20%
■ Internship Grade	10%

Homework Assignment for Lobbying class on March 21:

- Read Peters, *How Washington Works*, Chapter 2 (Lobbies)
- Read S. Vance, chapter posted from *The Influence Game*
- Read Abramoff, 2 chapters posted from *Capitol Punishment*
- Work on Student Group Project assignments

March 21

The Lobbying Class and Interest Group Practices

- Presentation from Lobbying Student Group
- General Discussion on How Lobbying Affects Policy Development, Lobbying Tactics/Strategy
- Guest speaker: TBD

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read articles on democratic institutions under International Organizations folder.
- Work on Student Group Project assignments

March 28

Site visit and Discussion of The Role of International Organizations in the Policy Process

Location: International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2011 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202

Speakers: IFES staff

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read “Devaluing the Think Tank” in *National Affairs* by Tevi Troy
- Read Chapter 4, “Competing in the Marketplace of Ideas: The Strategies of Think Tanks,” from *Do Think Tanks Matter?*
- Prepare think tank essay assignment (one page, single spaced)

April 4

The Role Think Tanks in the Federal Policy Process

- Presentation from Think Tank Group Project
- Submit Think Tank essay and white paper via Blackboard prior to class
- General discussion on how think tanks influence public policy

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read 2 AEI white papers posted to Blackboard.

April 11

Site visit and Discussion on Economic Opportunity

Location: American Enterprise Institute, 1789 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Speaker: TBD

- Discussion on the role of think tanks in the policy process, how their strategies have changed over time, and how one should view economic opportunity.

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read essays on political consulting and polling posted to Blackboard.
- Listen to podcast TBD posted to Blackboard.
- Please answer the questions on the discussion thread on the assigned reading under the folder “Outside Advisors.”

April 19

The Kitchen Sink of Outside Advisors: Fundraisers, Consultants, Political Parties, Pollsters and Pundits

Panel of Guest Speakers: TBD

- A panel of political consultants will discuss their roles in the policy process, how they work with incumbent elected officials and political novices, and how they seek to shape public opinion, candidate profiles, and ultimately, public policy.