

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

The Fund for American Studies

Public Policy + International Affairs Internship Seminar

General Information

Course: Public Policy Seminar, ECON 496

Dates: Thursdays, June 10 - July 22, 2021

Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm; Van Metre 113

Instructor: Professor Karen M. Czarnecki

Email: Primary: kczarneck@gmu.edu; Secondary: kczarnecki@mercatus.gmu.edu (Please email both accounts for quickest response.)

Phone: 703/993-9673

Office hours: By Appointment, but after class works well.

Professor Biography: Karen M. Czarnecki, Mercatus Center at George Mason University

Karen M. Czarnecki has spent over two decades in politics and public policy. She is currently the Vice President of Outreach for the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. She previously served as director of education at the Law and Economics Center at the Scalia Law School at George Mason. She has also served as a Congressional Chief of Staff and as a senior advisor to U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao in several capacities: Director of the Office of the 21st Century Workforce; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Acting Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment. Czarnecki received her BA and juris doctorate degrees from The Catholic University of America and is also an alumna of the 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.
- 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 professors or TFAS staff will send out a note to students if there is a change in schedule.

Grading:

▪ Class Attendance & Participation, including:	25%
○ Knowledge of readings	
○ Class Participation	
▪ Homework Assignments/Papers	35%
▪ Quizzes	10%
▪ Group Presentations	20%
▪ Internship Grade	10%

Grading standards

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	86-89
B	83-85
B-	80-82
C+	75-79
C	72-74
C-	70-71
D	68-69
F	67 or below

George Mason University's Grading Table:

Letter Grade	Grade Points	Undergraduate Courses
A+	4.00	Satisfactory / Passing
A	4.00	Satisfactory / Passing
A-	3.67	Satisfactory / Passing
B+	3.33	Satisfactory / Passing
B	3.00	Satisfactory / Passing

B-	2.67	Satisfactory / Passing
C+	2.33	Satisfactory / Passing
C	2.00	Satisfactory / Passing
C-	1.67	Satisfactory* / Passing
D	1.00	Unsatisfactory / Passing
F	0.00	Unsatisfactory / Failing

SYLLABUS

PRIOR TO THE FIRST CLASS:

Read the essays under the Role of Government folder and be prepared to discuss the takeaways from each essay in the first class. There is a **quiz on June 10** based upon the readings. See Blackboard for tips on how to prepare.

Week 1

June 10

(1st CLASS IS VIRTUAL) Brief Course Overview

- Introduction to subject matter, overview of assignments and expectations
- Group Presentation topics assigned at end of class

Role of Government Discussion

- **Quiz** on reading assignments posted to Blackboard (See Folder: Role of Government)
- Discussion on the Role of Government in Public Policy

Homework Assignment/Prep for June 17 class:

- Read *How Washington Works*, Chapter 7 (Congress)
- Read *Atlantic* article, *How to Salvage Congress*
- Read WSJ article, “Where Have All the Inspectors General Gone”
- Read *The Waxman Report*, Chapter 8 (*Fraud, Waste and Abuse*) by Henry Waxman
- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Write an Internship Interview Summary due on June 17, submit via Blackboard.

Week 2

June 17

Congress-Part 1 (CLASS IS IN PERSON, Room 113 Van Metre Hall)

- **Quiz** on 4 Congress readings
- Submit “Internship Interview Summary” prior to start of class via Blackboard
- General Discussion on How Congress Works, Congress’ Relationship with other Branches

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignment
- Read Chapter 2, “*Capacity for What? Legislative Capacity Regimes in Congress and the Possibilities for Reform*”, from *Congress Overwhelmed* (on Blackboard)
- Review the “The Waxman Report,” Chapter 8

Week 3

June 24

Congress, Part 2

- Congress Group Project Presentation
- Discuss Congressional Oversight and potential reform
- Guest Speaker: TBD

Homework Assignment for class:

- 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*

Week 4

July 1

Lobbying

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

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Work on Student Group Project assignments
- Read Peters, Chapters 3 (Bureaucracy) and 6 (Regulators)
- Under folder named Regulation, read
 - “The Problems with Regulation”
 - Getting More Bang for the Regulatory Buck” and
 - “Look Before You Leap: A Key Principle for Regulation”
- Optional Reading: Under Bureaucracy, read Why the Bureaucracy Fails (CATO)

Week 5

July 8

Regulation/Bureaucracy

- Presentation from Bureaucracy/Regulator Group
- Discussion of Agencies and Regulation generally

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?*
- Scan 2 white papers on Trade by Irwin and Boudreaux for general trade principles/concepts
- Prepare think tank essay assignment (one page, single spaced)

Week 6

July 15

Think Tanks in the context of Trade Policy

- Submit Think Tank essay and white paper via Blackboard prior to class
- Discussion on how think tanks influence public policy
- Guest Speaker: TBD

Homework Assignment for next class:

- Read Chapter 8 (White House) and “A Way Out”

- Listen to “The Staffer” podcast, link to episode featuring Tevi Troy in blackboard (only first 30 minutes)
- Prepare Final Paper-Policy Persuasion Paper

Week 7

July 22

The White House

- FINAL PAPER DUE -Policy Persuasion Paper via Blackboard prior to class
- Presentation from White House Group Project
- General Discussion on White House Operations, How Administrations Control the Agenda