

**GVPT 388W – Experiential Learning  
Maryland, Public Policy, and Beyond  
Spring 2020**

*In-person meetings: Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:15  
January 28<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup>, and April 28<sup>th</sup>  
Tydings 1101*

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**Class overview:**

GVPT 388W, Experiential Learning is a blended (online and in-person) course that supplements your Spring internship in the area of federal government, state government, or public policy. This class will connect your individual internships with larger themes of political science. There are three in-person classes, one in-person one-on-one meeting, and weekly online assignments. Assignments will reflect the course's focus on policymaking, developing expertise, and professional experience.

If you need to contact me in case of an absence, questions, or concerns, please email me ([sorellew@umd.edu](mailto:sorellew@umd.edu)).

**Campus policies:**

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses. Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies. Please follow up with me if you have questions or concerns.

**Class requirements and assignments:**

*Participation, 40%:* There are three in-class meetings for this course (January 28<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup>, and April 28<sup>th</sup>), each on Tuesday from 6:30 pm to 9:15 pm in Tydings 1101. The final meeting will consist of in-class policy discussions and presentations. Because there are only three in-class meetings, you are expected to attend all three. Please let me know as soon as possible if you see this being an issue.

There will also be weekly online assignments, **due every Monday at midnight, on ELMS.** Assignments will take the form of discussion boards, reading responses, and submitted written assignments. These are detailed below. Students are responsible for following the schedule in the syllabus and staying on top of assignments and readings.

*Short written assignments, 30%:* There are three short writing assignments: understanding the organization (March 2nd), the staff profile (March 16th), and the sample press release (March 30th).

*Research paper, 30%:* Over the course of the semester, you will no doubt take interest—or concern—with a public-policy issue related to your internship. The research paper, 8-10 pages double-spaced, should offer a critical analysis of a policy or procedure in your given field. This is an opportunity to develop additional expertise in your policy arena, and papers should reflect subsequent research beyond internship attendance. For those interested in law school or graduate school, I encourage you to view this paper as an opportunity to develop a targeted writing sample.

*Policy memo and presentation, 10%:* Students will use their research paper to prepare a one-page policy memo, providing an overview of the policy landscape and suggestions moving forward. This policy memo will be distributed to the entire class via ELMS. Students will be placed into smaller groups based on paper topic, and will present to each other on the final day of the class. Each student will offer a five-minute overview on their findings and proposal on the final day of the course. This presentation will be similar to a policy meeting: no PowerPoints or visual aids, only a brief discussion of the policy environment, concerns, or potential solutions is required. Students are expected to have read your peers' policy memos.

*Internship performance, 10%:* Showing up is only the first step of your internship. Internship coordinators will be given a survey on your performance. I will let you know when these have been distributed.

**Assignments and Schedule:** Assignments are due by Monday at midnight. In-person meetings will take place on Tuesdays from 6:30 pm – 9:15 pm in Tydings 1101.

### ***Week 1 – Syllabus Review and Introductions***

1/27 Assignment (due 1/27 at midnight!):

- Review this syllabus and complete the syllabus quiz.
- Complete the internship information survey on ELMS (Google Survey link).

#### **1/28 In-class meeting**

- In class, we will meet each other, go over class expectations, and discuss internship basics like attire, networking, and etiquette.

### ***Week 2 – Policymaking, the Congressional Perspective***

2/3 Assignment: Complete the following readings (posted on ELMS) and answer one of the discussion prompts on ELMS, engaging with both the literature and your classmates. Comments can be rebuttals or agreements, follow-up questions, or suggested areas for research. You must respond to at least two responses (initial posts or follow-up comments).

- Cooper, Joseph, and David W. Brady. "Institutional context and leadership style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *American Political Science Review* 75, no. 2 (1981): 411-425.
- Homan, Charles. *New York Times Magazine*, "[Mitch McConnell got everything he wanted. But at what cost?](#)". January 22, 2019.
- Draper, Robert. *New York Times Magazine*, "[Nancy Pelosi's Last Battle](#)". November 19, 2018.

### ***Week 3 – Policymaking, the Executive Perspective***

2/10 Assignment: Complete the following readings, answer one of the discussion prompts, and respond to at least two of your classmates' responses.

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis. "Toward a broader understanding of presidential power: A reevaluation of the two presidencies thesis." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 1-16.
- Dove, Edward-Isaac. *Politico*, "Obama demands VA answers". May 21, 2014.
- Phillips, Dave. *New York Times*, "Veterans Groups Urge Trump to Keep Obama's V.A. Secretary". December 12, 2016.

### ***Week 4 – Policymaking, the Interest Group Perspective***

2/17 Assignment: Complete the following readings, answer one of the discussion prompts, and respond to at least two of your classmates' responses.

- Bawn, Kathleen, et al. 2012. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 10:571-597.
- Confessore, Nick. *Washington Monthly*, “Welcome to the Machine: How the GOP disciplined K Street and made Bush supreme”, July 2003.

### ***Week 5 – Policymaking, State and Local Politics Perspective***

2/24 Assignment: Complete the following readings, answer one of the discussion prompts, and respond to at least two of your classmates’ responses.

- Lax, Jeffrey R. and Justin H. Phillip, “Gay Rights in the State: Public Opinion and Policy Responsiveness,” *American Political Science Review*, August 2009. (skim)
- Vestal, Christine, Pew Research. “Court Lets States Opt Out of Medicaid Expansion”, June 28, 2012.
- Stolberg, Sheryl Gay and Robert Pear, *New York Times*. “Deadline Near, Health Signups Show Disparity”, March 27, 2014.

### ***Week 6 – Understanding the Organization***

3/2 Assignment:

Consider the hierarchy, motivations, and constituents of your organization. Who are the major donors or interest groups? Where do you as an intern fit into the organization? Answering these types of questions will help you understand your role—and potential future! —in any organization. Refer to the past weeks’ readings.

- Write a 3-page, double-spaced response answering some (or all) of the questions below:
  - What is the motivation or purpose of the organization? Who are the constituents or donors of the organization? What services or products do they provide? Where does their funding come from?
    - Consider checking out [OpenSecrets.org](http://OpenSecrets.org).
  - What is their role in the policymaking process? Are the policymakers or shapers?
  - Give an overview of the hierarchy of the office—explain the chain of command. You may draw a diagram if you’d like.
  - How large is the organization? Are they private or public? What types of organizations do they partner with, especially considering their size?

### ***Week 7: In-Person Class – Q&A with in-the-field practitioners***

3/9 Assignment: Review participant bios and prepare at least one question for the panel. Submit your question via email by midnight 3/9.

**3/10 in-class panel.** *Guests: TBA, depending on your internships and interests.*

***Week 8: SPRANG BREAK!***

No assignments.

### ***Week 9: Staff Profiles are Due***

3/23 Assignment: Submit your three-page, double-spaced staff profile. View this as an opportunity to get to know someone at your workplace. Schedule a coffee, and discuss what their job entails, how they worked toward their current position, and their suggestions for someone entering the field. Profiles due March 16 at midnight.

### ***Week 10: Current Events and Policymaking Challenges***

3/30 Assignment: By now you should have an idea for your final public policy proposal and the specific challenges of your organization. Consider a current event or environmental challenge facing your public policy (example: partisanship, unpopular opinion, funding challenges, etc.).

- Find a recent (within the last two months) news article that pertains to a challenge your public policy of interest faces. Post the article and a short (two paragraph) explanation of how this effects your policy arena on ELMS. Comment on at least two of your classmate's post with a question, potential solution or concern, or suggested reading material.

### ***Week 11: Public Relations***

4/6 Assignment: Public relations are an important part of any organization—large or small, public or private—and an area ripe with career possibilities.

- Write a press release for your organization on a policy initiative or upcoming event. Refer to past press releases for your organization, as well as examples provided online. Emulate the writing style and presentation of your organization. This should be no more than one-page single-spaced. Submit via ELMS.

### ***Week 12: Office Politics—Diversity, Inequality, and Sexual Harassment***

4/13 Assignment: Complete the following readings, answer one of the discussion prompts, and respond to at least two of your classmates' responses.

- Burgat, Casey. R Street Institute, March 14, 2019: "[Who's on the Hill?](#)" (download PDF)
- Gaynor, Michael J. *Washington Post Magazine*, "[43 percent of internships at for-profit companies don't pay. This man is helping to change that](#)". January 15, 2019.
- NPR interview with Lilly Ledbetter: "[Lilly Ledbetter And The Fight For Gender Equality](#)"

### ***Week 13: Next Steps and Pay Raises***

4/20 Assignment: How are you going to frame this experience as a reason to hire you for future jobs?

- Reading: How to Ask For A Raise: Five Steps from Career Contessa (on ELMS)
- Write a cover-letter for a mid-level position outside of your organization (something you would feasibly apply to after graduating), highlighting the skills acquired at this internship.
- Submit your resume.

***Week 14: In-class Policy Presentations***

4/27 Assignment: Upload your one-page policy memo to ELMS.

**4/28 in-class meetings:**

- Prepare a short (5 minute) overview of your policy proposal.
- Review your classmates' proposals.
- For those in your assigned group, bring your notes and suggestions to class.

***Week 15 – Catch up week***

5/4: No assignment

***Week 16 – Final papers due***

Papers due by midnight on 5/13.