

SYLLABUS FALL, 2021 PSC 525

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

PSC 525 is a two-credit course designed to prepare ILSIP interns for a professional internship experience in and around the Illinois General Assembly. The course includes an orientation session and seven half-day seminars. The course provides an overview of Illinois government and politics, offering firsthand insight from guest experts into how the State government has dealt with a range of public policy challenges.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the course will initially meet virtually, via Zoom, with subsequent sessions to be held in person in the Illinois State Capitol complex (room TBD). The seminar will run from 1-4:30pm -- subject to adjustments to accommodate guest speakers, or for supplemental training scheduled by the ILSIP program coordinator.

The seminar will meet on seven days:

- Friday, September 17
- Friday, September 24
- Friday, October 1
- Friday, October 8
- Friday, October 15
- Friday, October 22
- Friday, November 5

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To provide a working knowledge of the organizations, offices and people who form Illinois' core State government and political institutions.
2. To help students begin to grasp how significant public policy issues have been (and are currently being) addressed in Illinois.
3. To prepare students to discuss, debate and write about State government issues and controversies in a civil, factual, and professional manner.
4. To provide concepts, vocabulary and context for the internship experience.

REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS

Each intern will receive four books at orientation:

1. Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, Illinois Politics: A Citizen's Guide
2. Nowlan and Johnson, Fixing Illinois: Politics and Policy in the Prairie State
3. Mooney and Van-Dyke Brown, Lobbying Illinois
4. Howard, Boyer Long, Lawrence, Mostly Good and Competent Men (Second Ed.)

The following materials from the Legislative Research Unit/COGFA will be discussed and are available @ http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lru/lru_home.html:

- *How a Bill Becomes Law in Illinois*
- *African American Legislators in Illinois, 1876-2019*
- *Illinois Women in Congress and the General Assembly*
- *1970 Illinois Constitution Annotated for Legislators*
- *Preface to Lawmaking*
- *Illinois Tax Handbook for Legislators*

ATTENDANCE

Attendance (and active participation) for all seminars is required. Absences due to work or illness will be accommodated. Interns who miss a seminar will be obligated to make up for their absence, in coordination with the instructor.

GRADES

The course grade will be calculated as follows: 25% for each of three papers; 25% on attendance and participation. Two extra credit writing options will be offered.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There are three written assignments for the seminar:

1. In Nowlan and Johnson's book, chapters two through seven address six major policy areas: 1) taxing and spending, 2) education, 3) health care and human services, 4) infrastructure, 5) economic development and 6) reengineering state government. Choose one of the areas and: a) outline/summarize the problem(s) as presented by the authors, b) critique their proposals for change and c) indicate whether, and why, relevant changes have (or haven't) been enacted since the book's publication.

SUGGESTED LENGTH – 4 PAGES – Due September 24

2. Predict the outcome of any competitive Illinois Legislative or Congressional race in 2022. Include a review of the candidates; consider the impact of local and statewide policy issues and current events. Who will be elected, by what margin and why? Note any impact that redistricting could have on the outcome. Be thoughtful, precise and objective in your analysis.

SUGGESTED LENGTH – 3 PAGES – Due October 8

3. *Identify a controversial current issue* in Illinois government and/or politics. (Examples include parental consent for abortions, unemployment benefit changes, gambling expansion, marijuana industry licensing, carbon pollution limits, income tax policy, and Chicago school board governance.) Citing at least two Illinois newspaper, radio or television accounts of the issue from the last 12 months, *provide brief history* of the topic. Which major interest groups and/or individual leaders have shaped the debate? *Summarize how two other states have addressed the issue*. Compare their approach to the options now available to policymakers in Illinois. Finally, make a related policy recommendation to advance the public interest in Illinois. Use facts and precision to persuade your reader.

SUGGESTED LENGTH – 5 PAGES – Due November 5

COURSE SCHEDULE

SEPT. 17

INTRODUCTIONS & “HOUSEKEEPING”

STARTING STRONG: TOOLS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED AND THRIVE:

- Research & Professional skill building: Brookens Library and Career Development Center

ILLINOIS: (SOME) RULES OF THE GAME

- History and politics of Constitution making in Illinois
- The legacy of the 1870 Constitution
- The basics of the 1970 Constitution
- Do we need a new one?

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapters 1-2
Nowlan and Johnson, introduction and chapter 1
Visit: LRU – 1970 Constitution annotated for Legislators

SEPT. 24

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- * How it is structured
- * Who are the players?
- * Where is the power?
- * How does it really work?

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 5
Mooney and Van-Dyke Brown, chapters 2 and 4

THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

- * The Office of the Governor: organization and roles
- * The Other Five: Who are they and what are their functions?

Read: Howard, Boyer Long, Lawrence, at least four biographies
Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 6

Visit: Websites of the six constitutional officers

OCT. 1

ILLINOIS: WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM AND HOW IS IT SPENT

- The Illinois State income tax – 1969 great debate, ups and downs since
- How is the State budget crafted each year?
- The role of GOMB

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 10
Visit: LRU, Illinois Tax Handbook for Legislators, www.Budget.Illinois.gov

ILLINOIS STATE AGENCIES

- How many are there, and what do they do?
- How do they interact with their federal counterparts?
- Management and oversight from the Governor, ILGA, and other parties

Visit: www.Budget.Illinois.gov & three State agency websites

OCTOBER 8

ILLINOIS ELECTIONS & REDISTRICTING

- * Role of the State Board of Elections
- * Election reform and ballot access
- * What happened to cumulative voting?
- * Who draws the lines – the politics of redistricting

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 3

Visit: www.elections.il.gov + www.VOTE.Illinois.Gov

OCTOBER 15

THE JUDICIARY

- How the court system is structured
- Reshaping the Supreme Court through elections and redistricting
- Should voters elect judges?

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 7

THE NATURE OF ILLINOIS POLITICS

- What is meant by political culture?
- Illinois' own civil war: Chicago vs. downstate (+collar counties)
- Is regionalism unique to Illinois, is it real and does it matter?

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 4

OCT. 22

THE THIRD HOUSE

- Who lobbies who in Illinois, and why?
- Are reforms needed to guard the public interest?

Read: Mooney and Van-Dyke Brown, Lobbying Illinois

THE FOURTH ESTATE

- What role does the news media play in shaping outcomes?
- The State House press corps: why has it dwindled?

Read: News of your choice + www.capitolfax.com

NOVEMBER 5

EDUCATION & OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN ILLINOIS

- Role of the ISBE, IBHE and ICCB
- How are schools, colleges and universities funded?

Read: Nowlan, Gove and Winkel, chapter 9