**POLITICAL SCIENCE 4953**

**Political Science Capstone Internship **

**Fall 2025: Gloria Cox, Internship Coordinator**

Instructor: Dr. Gloria Cox, Wooten Hall 163

University Distinguished Teaching Professor

Associate Professor and Internship Coordinator

Founding Dean, Honors College

Office Hours: My office hours are from 2 until 3 on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, and from 9 until 11 on Tuesday morning. If you need to meet with me, just send me a note so we can set up a time. My mobile number is 817-403-3514 in case you have an urgent matter to discuss.

E-Mail: Gloria.Cox@unt.edu

Please feel free to contact me at any time. If your concern is time-sensitive, please put **urgent** in the subject line. I greatly enjoy hearing from you with information about how your internship is going. Occasionally, some issue arises that needs/requires/would benefit from my input, so please let me know of such matters.

**THE PURPOSES OF AN INTERNSHIP**

With your Capstone internship, you have reached a milestone. You are just about there. The next stop is your baccalaureate degree. From that moment on, you will always be able to say, “I am a college graduate.” The Capstone internship is really important, though, as it is designed to bring together in some meaningful way your academic experiences and your career beginnings. We hope the Capstone internship will let you leave our department and the University with a feeling of completion. In a real sense, it is a bridge from your academic work to the start of a career. I hope your internship is a great experience and that it serves that purpose for you. We think that internships can help with several important goals:

**See if the career you have in mind is really for you**. You may have dreamed of working in a certain setting, and the internship allows you to see if you really want to pursue a career in that area or if it is not how you envisioned it. The best example may be in law, as I know many of my students aspire to attend law school and become practicing attorneys. Perhaps you are excited to work with an attorney or law firm, and your experience may well deepen and strengthen your resolve to earn a law degree. To some, though, it may turn out to be work you don’t enjoy very much, so you decide that law school may not be for you after all. Either way, the internship can have great value for you. Some of you will be working in Washington, D.C. and that will give you a chance to see if working in a Congressional Office is something to which you aspire. Whatever your internship, I hope it is useful to you in this way.

**You get practical work experience that will benefit you when you apply to graduate or law school or for a career-building position**. Your vita is enhanced, of course, by listing the internship, but the practical experience you acquire will serve you well when you have to make decisions about what to study, the actual degree to pursue, and the focus you want to have as you complete your formal education. Students often tell me that the kind of work expectations they were met with in a professional setting opened their eyes to lots of realities. Your internship will require a high degree of professionalism in all aspects of your conduct, including your presentation of self, your approach to your work, and your interaction with others. One of the most shocking changes for some students is how physically and mentally taxing it is to work from eight to five every day! A good internship will allow you to develop the skill of working as a professional team member, preparing documents of various sorts for the attorney, speeches for a candidate or Member of Congress, or other person who heads up the office where you are working, and even attending meetings with clients and working on their cases.

**You acquire knowledge relevant to your interests**. We recognize that there is always a gap between what we learn in class and how we apply that knowledge, and an internship provides experience dealing with the realities of our fields and interests. An internship helps you to bridge that gap as you turn the theories you have studied into actual work on the job. One of the things I want to know is what courses we could have offered that would have prepared you more effectively for your internship.

**ROLE OF THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR**

As the internship coordinator, I am the official instructor for your internship class. That means that I prepared the syllabus and will turn in a grade for you at the end of the class. Please let me emphasize, though, that my commitment to you goes well beyond those duties. My most important job is to make sure you have a great internship experience. That means I am here to help with any problems that arise and to answer questions you may have. You do not have to deal with an unpleasant or unfortunate situation alone, because I am here to assist you with any issues that come up during your internship. Please do not hesitate to call on me or send me a message. In case of an emergency or urgent situation, please call me at 817-403-3514 (my cell phone).

My wish for you: a great semester with a memorable internship that will provide many opportunities to learn and enjoy your work. Your Prof

**EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR INTERNSHIP**

The purpose of the internship is for you, our student, to acquire practical experience in the workplace. That means that we will not see you often or even at all in some cases, but we need to stay in touch. We have, therefore, set up certain requirements for the internship and will use Canvas to post information for you.

**DIRECTIONS FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP: Please read carefully and contact your UNT Coordinator (Dr. Cox) with any questions:**

**First Week of the Semester:** Please submit the Information Form. The form tells me where you are working and who is serving as your onsite coordinator. I will use this form to send a message to your onsite coordinator, and I will copy you on that message. Included will be a copy of the midterm and final evaluation forms. Later in the semester, when these are due, please remember that you have the form available if your coordinator says they do not have it.

**Submit Weekly Reports:** Check in Canvasunder Assignments to see when weekly reports are to be submitted. These reports need not be lengthy unless you feel the need to share information with me, but they do need to provide enough information so I will have a sense of what you are doing at your internship and how things are going. You should be able to upload a file for each report.

**Plan your schedule** so that you are able to complete the required 150 work hours before the end of the semester. I ask students to include with each report they submit their total hours up to that point. Students working an internship through the NTDC program do not need to submit a time sheet.

**Writing Assignment**: This class requires a writing assignment. Details are provided below. You will submit your project in Canvas.

**About Evaluations**: I ask onsite internship coordinators to send me an interim evaluation and then a final evaluation. These have proven hard to get and in recent semesters I have had to send many messages to get these evaluations. As a last effort, if I do not receive your final evaluation by the first day of final exams, I may have to assign a grade of Incomplete which will stay in place until I am able to get the final evaluation.

**Correspondence with UNT Coordinator**: **Responding to Communications from the Internship Coordinator:** From time to time, I will contact you to see how things are going and perhaps post something on Canvas for you. My expectation is that you will check Canvas regularly to make sure you are not missing something, and that you will respond to inquiries from the internship coordinator within a week and hopefully sooner.

**Writing Assignment**: The Capstone Internship now requires a research paper as part of the semester’s work. In March 2024, the American Political Science Association (APSA) issued an important report called “Rethinking Political Science Education.” As part of the report, APSA said that undergraduate students in political science should graduate with certain skills. Here is the APSA report about those skills:

With respect to skills, Political Science students will demonstrate an ability to:

1. Analyze political phenomena and critique arguments in a theoretically and empirically informed manner.

2. Engage as citizens through problem solving, collective action, and collaborative decision making at all levels from local to global.

3. Identify, evaluate, properly use, and cite verifiable sources of evidence.

4. Engage thoughtfully and respectfully with competing values and perspectives.

5. Use qualitative and quantitative methods effectively and appropriately.

6. Communicate effectively in written and verbal modes to a variety of audiences.

We are hoping that your political science classes, particularly your internship, aided you in the development of these important skills, so your paper should attempt to link your political science courses, especially your internship, to at least two of these specific skills. I will look forward to your discussion.

* For full credit for this assignment, please be sure to treat this as a research paper, providing factual information to support your views.
* Be sure to write a thoughtful paper that includes your own ideas and assessments, but also include references for any factual material you provide. Use in-text citations within your paper if needed to document your sources.
* Your paper is limited to three double-spaced printed pages.
* Your paper will be graded as 75 percent content, 15 percent sources/references, and 10 percent spelling, grammar, and style.
* Due Date: Nov 14; paper should be uploaded to Canvas

**Summary of Course Requirements**

**1. Submission of Information Form (Due First Week of Semester)**

**2. Submission of Weekly Reports (See Assignments in Canvas for dates)**

**3. Mid-term Evaluation Completed by Your Onsite Coordinator**

**4. Final Evaluation Completed by Your Onside Coordinator (December 1)**

**5. Completion of Writing Assignment in Canvas (November 14)**

**6. Completion of Required Work Hours and Submission of your time sheet to coordinator as an email attachment (December 1).**

**7. Responding to Communications from the Internship Coordinator**

**COURSE GRADE:** Each of the following will be counted as a separate component of your course grade, and all three components must be successfully completed for a passing grade in the internship course.

* **Your actual work at your internship, as evaluated by your onsite coordinator (50 percent of your grade).** An evaluation by your onsite coordinator is required. An excellent evaluation will be required for a grade of A on your internship. A rating of Unsatisfactory will be viewed as failing. Your UNT professor may follow up with your onsite coordinator to talk about how you were rated and may override the assessment of the onsite coordinator if the situation warrants this step.
* **Completion of the 150 required hours**. A grade deduction will be made for completion of fewer than 150 hours and the student will fail or receive a grade of Incomplete if fewer than 125 hours are completed. This is an absolute requirement and does not constitute a percentage of your course grade.
* **Satisfactory completion of the weekly reports, the course writing assignment, and timely submission of responses to messages sent from the UNT coordinator (50 percent of your grade).**

If something goes wrong at your internship, please contact me right away so we can work on the problem. Your grade does not depend on your having a more successful or less successful internship experience. Instead, your grade is based on your meeting the requirements of the course.

**Policies Concerning Your Internship**s:

* Please do not change your internship without being in touch with me first. Changes are possible, but only with the permission and guidance of the internship coordinator. If you encounter problems or issues and believe you need to make a change in your internship placement, please contact me so I can be part of the decision-making process. Doing so on your own may result in your not receiving credit for the hours worked.
* All internships in our department are face to face, and hours earned through remote work will not count toward fulfillment of your internship requirements. My expectation is that the agreements in place when we planned your internship will govern the internship. Changes are possible, of course, so long as we talk about them and make a new plan.
* We take pride in the wonderful students who go out into the community for their internships. Thank you for conducting yourself in a professional manner in every aspect of your internship.

**OVERALL, the expectation of the Department of the Political Science and the internship coordinator is that you will have a great internship experience, and that you will represent yourself, the Department, and the University in a professional and responsible manner.**

**Working with the Office of Disability Access**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.