

## Internships in the Department of Political Science

(Please note that this page is NOT designed for students who wish to participate in the Tennessee Legislative Internship Program. If you are interested in that program, please proceed to this link to learn more: <https://polisci.utk.edu/legislative-internships.php>).

This page is designed to explain how you can earn class credit for a political science internship through *Political Science 494: Internship*. This course is described in the catalogue as follows: *POLS 494 – Internship (1-6 Credit Hours. Grading Restriction: Satisfactory/No Credit grading only. Repeatability: May be repeated. Maximum 6 hours. Credit Restriction: May not be applied toward the political science major or minor.*

Here are the steps you need to take to get credit for your internship.

First, you will need to **find an internship**. Unfortunately, the Department of Political Science lacks the resources necessary to locate and secure internships for students. Thusly, students who wish to enroll in POLS 494 and receive class credit for an internship must first find an internship. In the most general terms, an internship is paid or unpaid employment. If you secure such employment and it exposes you to political, governmental, or legal institutions and processes, you may be eligible for internship credit. *Eligibility for internship class credit rests on the discretion of the head of the department.*

Most students who receive internship credit take paid or unpaid work with one of the following: 1. A state, local, or federal government agency; 2. A political party; 3. A political campaign organization; 4. An interest group or policy-related organization; 5. A state, local, or federal judicial institution; 6. A law firm; 7. A media company; 8. A political science professor, instructor, or graduate student performing research. This is not an exhaustive list, and you may find an opportunity with some other entity or person.

Again, it is up to you to find an internship. What this usually entails is locating an entity or person and asking it/him/her to allow you to intern. In some cases, organizations or people will reach out to students and ask them if they would like to be interns. Please read all of the emails you receive from departmental personnel, as well as emails that are posted to the undergraduate listserv, as these emails may contain information and internship opportunities.

Second, you will need to **get your internship approved**. Once you have located and secured a position that you believe might be eligible for class credit, you will **fill out an internship application**. You can find the application here: <https://polisci.utk.edu/docs/internships.pdf>. On your application you will be asked to provide information about: 1. Yourself; 2. The agency, organization, or person for whom you will work; 3. Your immediate supervisor (the person to whom you will report directly; if you are working for a professor, instructor, or graduate student, your immediate supervisor will be this person) and how the department can reach this person; 4. The work you will be doing; 5. The number of class credits you would like to receive for your internship (more on this below); 6. The semester in which you would like to enroll in POLS 494; 7. Any previous internship class credits you have received.

It is important to note that POLS 494 is a variable credit course, for which you can receive between one and six credit hours. On your application, you will indicate a number of hours between one and six that you would like to earn for your internship. Ultimately, however, the department determines

how many hours you will receive. Generally speaking, we use the following table to determine how many class hours you will receive for your internship:

Number of class credits you will receive	Number of hours per week you will work (in a standard, 15 week semester)
1	4
2	7
3	10
4	14
5	17
6	20

The department understands that some internships do not accommodate the standard academic calendar. As long as the majority of hours that you work fall within a given semester, you can receive internship credit for that semester.

After you fill out your internship application, please email it to Dr. Pat Freeland at [pfreelan@utk.edu](mailto:pfreelan@utk.edu) or place a hard copy in Dr. Freeland's box in 1001 McClung Tower, the main office for the Department of Political Science. Dr. Freeland will evaluate your application initially, and after she is done she will pass it on to Dr. Brandon Prins, Department Head. Dr. Prins has the final say over all internship applications.

After you submit your application, you must **provide the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Dr. Pat Freeland) with a letter from your immediate supervisor**. This letter should indicate that you have indeed secured an internship with the entity or person listed on your application. The letter should also describe in general terms what you will be doing, how many hours you will be working per week, and the dates of your internship. We ask for this information to confirm the information you provide on your application. This letter may be either submitted via email ([pfreelan@utk.edu](mailto:pfreelan@utk.edu)) or placed directly in Dr. Freeland's box in 1001 McClung Tower, the main office for the Department of Political Science. You may either submit this letter on your own behalf, or have your supervisor submit it directly to Dr. Freeland.

Third, you will **sign up for the internship course**. Once the department receives your completed application, the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Dr. Pat Freeland) will process the application. From here, Dr. Freeland will pass your application on to Dr. Prins. If you are approved (and most applications are indeed approved), you will receive an email stating this, and you will be directed to enroll in *POLS 494: Internship*. To enroll in POLS 494: Internship, you will need to email Leslie Tolman, Administrative Specialist, with the Department of Political Science. She will be the one to register you for the course. Again, POLS 494 is a variable credit course. So when you email Leslie, be sure to include the number of hours for which you have been approved (1-6). The instructor of record for POLS 494 is the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Pat Freeland. The course will be administered by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Freeland.

Fourth, you will **complete your internship**. During the course of the semester, you will complete your internship.

Fifth, at the end of the semester, you will **submit an internship journal**. At the end of the semester (that is, in the week before final examinations), you will write and then submit an internship journal. An internship journal is an 8-12 page, informal paper that describes what you did and what you learned during your internship. We require this for our records. You will submit your internship journal (either via email or in person) to Dr. Pat Freeland ([pfreelan@utk.edu](mailto:pfreelan@utk.edu)). After the department reviews your internship journal, the instructor of record—Dr. Freeland—will assign you a grade. You will either PASS or FAIL.