

PBPL 398-01
Public Policy & Law Internship Seminar
Fall 2024

Trinity College

1 Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Mondays: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Tuesdays: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Wednesdays: 1:30pm-3:30pm

and by appointment

Class Location: McCook 309

Course Time: 1:30pm to 4:10 R

2 Course Description and Purpose

A core part of the liberal arts broadly, and Trinity College's mission specifically, is taking what you have learned in class and translating it into society writ large. This seminar does just that with a special focus on your internship. While you surely gained (or are presently gaining) innumerable valuable experiences during your internship, our focus here is on policy-making. What kinds of policies did you see in action? What kinds of issues did you see that you think need to be addressed with a policy? What kinds of policies would you have liked to see? What kinds of policies would you like to work toward in the future?

It is easy to say, "I'd like to see Policy X!" Implementation is more difficult. To be successful, one must communicate the proposal to others. Since there are multiple stakeholders, a policy must be communicated in multiple ways. For example, you might explain legal precedent in a brief to a judge differently than an interest group might frame a legal battle in a fundraising pitch. In this seminar you will pitch the same policy proposal to multiple audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Draw upon theoretical knowledge from course work and practical experiences to articulate tangible policy proposals.
2. Effectively communicate to stakeholders in a variety of contexts.
3. Effectively collaborate with & critique peers' ideas.

3 Course Format

This course is seminar based. This means our class will generally be a group discussion rather than a static lecture. This works best when everyone participates in the discussion. To this end, it is critical to read the material in advance and reflect on how the material relates to the course as a

whole. In class, you must engage and constructively critique your peers' ideas. Remember, our ultimate goal is to help each other most fully develop ideas and projects.

4 Requirements

Text

There are no required books for this class. Some weeks there are readings on Moodle. In other weeks, you will read your peers' materials and provide feedback to them. In those weeks, you will receive the material directly from your peers or me.

Assessment

This course is worth 100 points which are broken up over several different items.

- Writing Reflections: 10 points
 - Presentation: 10 points
 - Policy Memo Project: 30 points
 - Op-Ed Project: 25 points
 - Peer Feedback: 15 points
 - Participation: 10 points
1. **Writing Reflections (10 points)**— Early in the semester, I will ask you to write about your experiences at your internship as well as your plans after Trinity. While these are relatively straight forward assignments, give them careful thought. They are designed to help me get to know your projects and you better. They also serve to help you think about the policy proposal which will form the basis of your other assignments.
 2. **Presentation (10 points)**— We often think of papers as the main academic and professional output. However, very often those papers are developed through presentations where authors develop their ideas in a dynamic back and forth with peers. To that end, you will present your early thoughts on your projects to the class. Afterwards, we will have a dedicated class discussion about your project to more fully develop your ideas. Since it is difficult to retain all of the feedback you receive during a presentation, one of your peers will take close notes and write you a letter detailing feedback.
 3. **Policy Memo (30 points)**— You will prepare a policy memo as if for a policymaker in your internship area. This could be geared toward a supervising attorney, a director of a non-profit, a member of the State Legislature, or a myriad of any other stakeholders. I realize some of you may have never prepared a policy memo. Accordingly, early in the semester Professor Williamson will give a brief tutorial on how to do so. Your policy memo will need to be supported by research from the library databases. To that end, we will have a guest speaker from the Library early in the semester to go over the resources available to you. This assignment is broken into a not so rough draft and a final draft. It is also supported by a workshop to provide feedback along the way.

4. **Op-Ed Article (25 points)**— One of the most effective ways to communicate with the public is to write an op-ed in the newspaper. Op-eds are typically short. While it might seem intuitive that a short op-ed means they are “easy” and can be knocked out quickly, they are actually quite tricky to write. You need to choose your words and your points of emphasis carefully. You also need to know your audience; an op-ed cannot be written like a term paper. Fortunately, Harriet Jones, from the *Connecticut Mirror* will visit us early in the semester to discuss how to effectively write an op-ed. Your op-ed should focus on the same topic as your policy memo. It will likewise be broken into a not so rough draft and a final draft. Additionally, it is supported by a workshop to provide feedback along the way.
5. **Peer Feedback (15 points)**— Rarely do decisions or proposals get made by one person working in isolation. Rather projects, even solo-authored ones, often have a fair bit of collaboration involved. To this end, you will periodically be asked to review your peer’s work and offer them feedback. This goes beyond “nice point;” that is an empty platitude that doesn’t help anyone. There is an art to offering critiques in an empathetic way. This lays the foundation for a valuable skill that will translate to practically any career. You will practice this via a feedback letter to a peer and via feedback in two workshops supporting the policy memo and op-ed projects.
6. **Participation (10 points)**— Learning is not a passive activity. My goal is always a dynamic discussion rather than a static lecture. Particularly in a seminar, this is critical. If you see a connection, raise it- it may illuminate an unclear concept for a peer. If you have a question, ask it. You can rest assured someone else in the class is wondering the same thing. In addition, seminars are premised on the idea that we are all actively collaborating in order to better understand the material. Your participation will help your peers- and their participation will help you.

Assessment Scale

A: >94	A-: 90-93.9	B+: 87-89.9	B: 84-86.9	B-: 80-83.9	C+
C: 74-76.9	C-: 70-73.9	D+: 67-69.9	D: 64-66.9	D-: 60-63.9	F: <60

5 Course Policies

Contacting the Instructor

I am happy to help you either via e-mail, office telephone, or in-person during office hours. Of course, if office hours do not fit your schedule let me know and we can schedule a meeting at a time that is more convenient. If you come to office hours you should come prepared; bring your book, notes, and read the material in advance. If you contact me via e-mail, I will respond within 48 hours, though in most cases it will be faster. However, in any e-mail you must identify yourself and use proper format which consists of an opening (As simple as the recipient’s name), a closing (as simple as your name), and a descriptive subject line. If you do not follow that convention or if you use Internet shorthand (ie: “u” instead of “you,”) I will not reply to the message. Telephone calls will be returned as soon as possible, though e-mail is usually quicker. Please note, the phone number listed is my office phone; it cannot receive text messages.

Make-up Exams and Assignments

To qualify for a make-up test a student must notify me of the absence in advance via e-mail and provide documentation. Make-up exams will be a written research paper.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

A crucial component of academic writing is effective use of sources. Using the words or ideas of others without granting them credit constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is not permitted on any assignment, whether a short entry on Moodle, a draft, a prospectus, or a final submission. Incidents of plagiarism and academic dishonesty will be addressed in accordance with college policies (Student Handbook) and may result in a failing grade and/or more serious consequences. Trinity asks that students sign a declaration on academic honesty at the beginning of the semester, which we will complete after the first day of class.

This class aims to equip you with critical thinking and writing skills, which can only be gained through practice. Therefore, you should independently draft and refine your own written work without using artificial intelligence or other shortcuts.

Please contact me with any questions regarding use of sources and, when in doubt, acknowledge assistance and cite.

Artificial Intelligence

Use of an AI Generator such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, DALL-E, etc. is explicitly prohibited in this class. The information derived from these tools is based on previously published materials. Therefore, using these tools without proper citation constitutes plagiarism. Additionally, be aware that the information derived from these tools is often inaccurate or incomplete. It's imperative that all work submitted should be your own. Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools may receive a zero and or be reported for academic misconduct.

Collaboration

As part of this class you will give feedback to your peers. You may discuss readings with classmates outside of class and consult associates at the Writing Center. Where such discussion or guidance significantly shapes your written product, students should acknowledge assistance in a footnote, in line with academic conventions. While discussion of ideas and peer review is strongly encouraged, **all writing and revising must be executed independently.**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center as soon as possible to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access. If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me by the end of week two of

classes. For those students with accommodations approved after the start of the semester, a minimum of 10 days' notice is required. Student Accessibility Resources can be reached by emailing SARC@trincoll.edu.

Additional Assistance

As noted above, I am happy to see you for extra help by appointment. For additional assistance, you are encouraged to consult the Writing Center.

At the Trinity College Writing Center, specially trained peer tutors (called Writing Associates) will help you improve your writing no matter your skill level. Writers are welcome at all stages of the writing process, from the moment you receive an assignment, to when you've produced a draft, to the moment you're polishing up your final version. You can work with a Writing Associate in-person at 115 Vernon Street room 109, or upload your paper using our online scheduling system and receive feedback via an asynchronous eTutoring appointment. Visit the Writing Center web page for further information and procedures. Students can walk-in during our hours of operation or reserve appointments in advance online by registering here.

Aetna Quantitative Center: The Q-Center, located in MECC 172, is open for tutoring during the semester Mondays-Thursdays 4-10pm and Sundays 7-10pm. We usually offer support for QLIT 101, Calculus I, II, & III, Statistics, Economics 101 and 218, as well as other courses on demand. The Q-Center works primarily on a walk-in basis and we usually open for tutoring the second or third week of classes. Students can check our website for the schedule and opening days. If you have any questions, please contact the Center's director, Kaitlyn Gingras at kaitlyn.gingras@trincoll.edu.

Student Equity and Emergency Fund: The Fund provides students with financial assistance for emergency expenses that are temporary, significant, unforeseen, and unavoidable. Emergency expenses include but are not limited to: textbooks and other essential academic expenses; medications and other costs related to emergency medical care; food insecurity; summer internship funding; educational testing for accommodations; travel costs related to a death or illness in the immediate family; or replacement of essential personal belongings due to fire, theft, or natural disaster. Additional details on applying for funds may be found here.

Trinity College Policy on Sexual/Gender Discrimination: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Trinity College prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all of its programs and activities, including academics, employment, athletics, and other extracurricular activities. This prohibition includes gender-based harassment, sexual violence and other sexual harassment. Questions regarding Title IX may be referred to the College's Title IX Coordinator, Shannon Lynch, located at 208 Mather Hall, 300 Summit St. Hartford, CT 06106, or via email at titleixcoordinator@trincoll.edu. You can find more information here at the Title IX Office website.

Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire period. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the instructor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, the syllabus includes many sensitive topics which can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly. This is to say you must be respectful, in both content and tone, of diverse opinions and not make personal or partisan attacks.

Acceptable Comments

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.
- include interrupting the instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- include ignoring the instructor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. These changes may come via e-mail. Make sure to check your university supplied email regularly. You are accountable for all such communications.

6 Tentative Course Schedule

A few notes about reading the course schedule:

- “(M)” means that reading can be found on Moodle

Course Introduction

Thursday September 5– NO CLASS: APSA MEETING

- *No readings- But write your internship narrative.*

Thursday September 12– Intro to the Class & Life Beyond Trinity

- **Guest Speaker:** *Lisel Moynihan, Career & Life Design Center*

Thursday September 19– Communicating Your Internship to the World

- Druckman, James N. 2015. “Communicating Policy-Relevant Science.” *PS: Politics Science & Politics*. 48(S1): 58-69 (M)
- Saad, Lydia. 2023. “Historically Low Faith in U.S. Institutions Continues.” *Gallup*. (M)
- SteelFisher, Gillian K., Mary G. Findling, Hannah L. Caporello, Keri M. Lubell, Kathleen G. Vidoloff Melville, Lindsay Lane, Alyssa A. Boyea, Thomas J. Schafer, and Eran N. Ben-Porath. 2023. “Trust in US Federal, State, and Local Public Health Agencies During COVID-19: Responses and Policy Implications.” *Health Affairs*. 42(3): 328-337. (M)
- x - Kennedy, Brian and Alec Tyson. 2023. “Americans’ Trust in Scientists, Positive Views of Science Continue to Decline.” *Pew Research Center*. (M)

Thursday September 26– Communicating With Policymakers

- Cairney, Paul and Richard Kwiatkowski. 2017. “How to Communicate Effectively With Policymakers: Combing Insights From Psychology and Policy Studies.” *Palgrave Communications*. 3: 1-8 (M)
- Arnautu, Diana and Christian Dagenais. 2021. “Use and Effectiveness of Policy Briefs as a Knowledge Transfer Tool: A Scoping Review.” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*. 8: 1-14 (M)
- Lewis, Neil A. and Jonathan Wai. 2020. “Communicating What We Know and What Isn’t So: Science Communication in Psychology.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. XX: 1-Y. (M)

Thursday October 3– Policy Memos & Research Strategies

- Williamson, Abigail Fisher. 2011. “Policy Memo Instructions.” (M)
- The Elements of an Essay (M)
- Sample Policy Memo #1 (M)
- Sample Policy Memo #2 (M)
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** *Professor Abigail Williamson, Public Policy & Law and Political Science*
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** *Jeffrey Liska, Watkinson Library*

Thursday October 10– Op-Eds & Strategies for Reaching the Public

- Duke University. n.d. “Writing Effective Op-Eds.” (M)
- Sample *Connecticut Mirror* Op-Eds. (M)
- Lewis, Neil A. and Jonathan Wai. 2020. “Communicating What We Know and What Isn’t So: Science Communication in Psychology.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. XX: 1-Y. (M)
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** *Harriet Jones, Connecticut Mirror*

Thursday October 17– Policymaker & Stakeholder Perspectives

- **GUEST SPEAKER:** *Anissa Beal: Edgar & Ivy’s Cat Sanctuary, Corpus Christi Texas.*
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** *TBA*

Thursday October 24– Project Discussions

- *Half the class presents. Half the class provides feedback.*

Thursday October 31– Project Discussions

- *Half the class presents. Half the class provides feedback.*

Thursday November 7– Individual Meetings

- *Work on your ideas and memos*

Thursday November 14– Individual Meetings

- *Work on your ideas and memos*

Thursday November 21– Policy Memo Workshop

- *Revisions & Feedback to a Partner*

Thursday November 28– **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

- *Enjoy your day!*

Thursday December 5– Op-Ed Workshop

- *Revisions & Feedback to a Partner*

Final Op-Ed Due by: Friday December 13, 12:00pm via Moodle

7 Due Dates & Assignments

- **Week One (09/01)**
 - Sat. September 7: *Internship Narrative*
- **Week Two (09/08)**
 - Wed. September 14: *20 Years Narrative*
- **Week Three (09/15)**
 - *Nothing!*
- **Week Four (09/22)**
 - *Nothing!*
- **Week Five (09/29)**
 - *Nothing!*
- **Week Six (10/06)**
 - *Nothing!*
- **Week Seven (10/13)**
 - *Nothing!*
- **Week Eight (10/20)**
 - R October 24: *Presentations/Feedback*
- **Week Nine (10/27)**
 - R October 31: *Presentations/Feedback*
- **Week Ten (11/03)**
 - R November 7: *Individual Meetings; class does not meet*
- **Week Eleven (11/10)**
 - R November 14: *Individual Meetings; class does not meet*
 - Sat. November 16: *Policy Memo Draft*
- **Week Twelve (11/17)**
 - R November 21: *Policy Memo Workshop*
 - Sat. November 23: *Policy Memo Letter*
 - Sun. November 24: *Op-Ed Draft*
- **Week Thirteen (11/24)**
 - R November 28: *Thanksgiving Day: No class*

- **Week Fourteen (12/01)**

- R December 5: *Op-ed Workshop*
- Sat. December 7: *Op-ed Letter*

- **Week Fifteen (12/08)**

- M December 9: *Final policy Memo*
- F December 13: *Final Op-ed*