POS 4941 Political Science Internship Program Writing Guidelines

THE WEEKLY JOURNAL

As part of your field work experience, you are required to keep a weekly journal of your activities and observations as an intern. You may want to write something on a daily basis, or you may choose to organize your journal entries by week. The content of the entries must connect what you are experiencing in the internship with what you have learned in the traditional classroom. For example, if you are working in the legal profession, connect your experience with the legal process with theory or literature you have covered in the classroom. You might make a connection with something you’ve learned in a constitutional law course or you might broaden your context to include observations about the legal process and our democratic system. The weekly journal is NOT a forum for you to simply identify your weekly activities—you must make a connection between your internship work and what you have learned in the classroom as a political science major. At the end of the semester, you will compile all of your entries into a single three ring binder.

THE FINAL PAPER

The final report should be typed, doubled-spaced, with one inch margins. The completed paper should be approximately 15-20 pages in length. Please be sure to spell check and proof read your work. You will include your final paper in the binder that you turn-in for grading.

Remember, these guidelines provide you with a framework for your paper; they are not meant to be all inclusive. Be sure to adequately address each of the five (5) sections and provide examples to illustrate your observations and conclusions about your work environment and professional experience.

I. Introduction

Begin your paper by briefly explaining your internship and why you chose this type of field work experience during your college career. What were your expectations (or beliefs) about the organization and its responsibilities prior to joining the organization as an intern? I’m not asking you about your expectations regarding your internship; instead, I’m asking you to think about how you perceived the agency/office/organization prior to your internship.

II. Description of the Organization and its Public Policy Goals

Please provide a description of the organization. Give the reader a sense of the history of the organization. To do this you may need to speak with your colleagues in the workplace, or do a bit of outside research. What is the overall mission of the organization and how does your office or department contribute to that mission? If your organization has an official “Mission Statement,” include it. Provide a description of the organizational structure of the business or agency, and tell the reader how your department or office fits into that organizational structure. What kinds of financial resources does your office or department have access to? What are the
organization’s revenue sources and what are your major expenditure categories? Lastly, describe the professional culture in your office. By professional culture, I am not asking you to tell me if everyone is nice and gets along; instead I’m asking you to think about the office environment and how interactions between staff members generally take place. Is the office environment formal and is there a clear sense of hierarchy in staffing, or is the office environment casual and staff members of all levels are easily accessible—these are obviously two extremes, your office may fall somewhere in between.

III. The Role of the Organization in the Political Arena

Explain for the reader why and how your organization is (or isn’t) affected by politics and the electoral fortunes of the Democratic and Republican parties in Florida. For example, is your organization affected by changes in power at the gubernatorial level, at the level of the state legislature, at the county level, or at the federal level? What role does politics play in your organization—is it an overtly political workplace or a non-political environment. If you are working with a campaign organization, explain to the best of your ability the candidate’s interaction with local, state, and national party organizations.

IV. Critical Analysis

Think about your organization’s mission and evaluate the performance of your organization (or department/office) in achieving that mission. Identify the strengths of your office—be sure to provide examples to back up your assessment. Identify the weaknesses of your office. How could your organization improve its performance? Be specific. Given your analysis, is the organization well equipped to achieve its stated mission? Feel free to evaluate the overall mission of the organization and if you believe it needs revising, tell the reader why.

V. Conclusion

Return to your original expectations about your internship experience. How has your perception of the organization changed as a result of your internship experience? Evaluate the value of your internship as a learning experience. What was the best thing about it—the aspect of the internship that you enjoyed the most? What was the least enjoyable part of the internship? What suggestions do you have for improving upon the experience if a student were to participate in this same internship in the future?

BOTH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES DURING THE SEMESTER INTERNSHIP IS COMPLETED. ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE EMAILED TO DR. PETER FUNKE (PNFUNKE@USF.EDU).