



Washington, D.C. Programs
Boston University Study Abroad



**INTERNSHIP COURSE SEMINAR
THE WASHINGTON EXPERIENCE
STUDY ABROAD 400E [4 CREDITS]**

Spring 2025

INSTRUCTOR

- David R. Collier, PhD (dcollier@bu.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Washington Experience is both an academic and *participation-driven* four-credit course tied to your Internship and *the program* as a whole. This course is designed to complement your internship experience with academic credentials. Attendance is mandatory. Attendance at all *program-wide* events also plays a role in this class and affects your final grade. **All students earn ONE Hub credit for Individual in the Community (IIC).**

As your internship does *not* provide you with direct academic credit, this course supplements what you will be learning and *doing* on a daily basis while grounding you in the issues that shape Washington, D.C. The class is meant to help guide you as you become a working professional in and out of Washington. If your aim is to pursue a career in the nation’s capital, this course can only help you. If you realize later in the semester that D.C. is not in your future, this course is also meant to help by addressing very specific questions about your developing skills, interests, the concept of professionalism and work ethic, the power of relationships, approaches to the job market, amongst others.

This course will also allow us to delve into how Washington, D.C. functions with a focus on issues and institutions. We will highlight samples of what the city has to offer and will host and/or visit alumni and other guest speakers while focusing on their respective careers and the skills they’ve built. The four main foci of this course will be:

- D.C. as a political and policy-centered city **#PolicyDC**
- D.C. as a place of work and how you can fit in and thrive **#CareerDC**
- D.C. as a global center **#GlobalDC**
- D.C. as a unique cultural hub **#CultureDC**

The goal is to nudge you into thinking about vital subjects affecting our society and way of life so take advantage of the material provided and the insights given by our guest speakers. If you leave this class, and the program as a whole, thinking more about the challenges we face as a people and if you’re more comfortable dissecting the issues and analyzing them a bit more in aiming to find long- and short-term solutions, we will have met our objective. If you also feel just a bit more empowered in taking certain steps in preparing for your career ahead, the course will have maximized its purpose.

This is *the* mandatory course for the semester, thus, attendance (*) is mandatory. If you miss class or a field trip, you will require extra credit to boost your grade (see us ASAP if this happens).

Learning Outcomes
Gain an understanding of workplace dynamics, professional expectations, and the influence of culture on both
Build proficiency in a range of business or industry skills, including professional and intercultural communication
Refine and clarify professional and career goals through critical analysis of the internship experience
Gain a better understanding of pressing issues affecting our government and political/policy leaders both in Washington and in academic circles.
Have a sense of the unique nature of Washington, D.C.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation – This includes each student actively participating and contributing to class discussions and the program more generally, as well as attending all sessions and field trips. Being *on-time* counts here as well!

Networking Reflection – Networking is an inescapable aspect of professional life in D.C. and by honing your networking skills through practice, you will expand your career opportunities and create lasting connections that will benefit you throughout your life. This assignment asks you to organize a 30-minute conversation with a professional within your field of interest but outside of your direct supervisor. Ideally this should be an in-person conversation at a coffee shop or other casual location. Through this experience, you will explore career paths, refine your academic focus, and develop professional communication skills. The objective is for you to feel comfortable reaching out to D.C. professionals and to gain valuable insights into the industry, expand your professional network, and enhance your understanding of potential career paths. Your reflection of the experience should be 750-1000 words.

Op-Ed – Each student will engage with a contemporary issue affecting American society or the global community that holds personal significance or importance to them. Students are encouraged to express their opinions and perspectives on a topic of their choice, provided it relates to a broader societal or global concern and has some connection to Washington, D.C. This could be an issue that impacts the District, is seen through a D.C. lens, or cites references housed here (e.g. D.C.-based Think Tank reports). The aim is to cultivate critical thinking, research, and persuasive writing skills while encouraging students to become active contributors to public discourse. More details will be given once the semester has begun.

Visual Essay / Instagram Takeover – All students will create a visual essay encapsulating their entire semester in a *personalized* way. This is the assignment you purposely will relate to field trips and what you’ve seen, heard, felt and experienced. This assignment compels you to be creative, artistic, engaging and as colorful as you wish. It is potentially an ideal portfolio piece you can use as a work sample. How much you write and how much you photograph is up to you, but there should be a good balance of good prose and pinpointed, thematic photos.

Assignment Summary	Weight	Due Date
Participation (includes class discussions, attendance, timeliness, field trips, and <i>program-wide</i> participation)	25%	Continuous
Informational Interview Reflection	20%	February 15
Op-Ed on a local, national, or global issue of importance to <i>you</i>	15%	March 29
Visual Essay / Instagram Takeover	15%	By May 2
Internship Supervisor Evaluation	25%	Continuous
Total	100%	

READINGS

There are no textbooks needed for this class. Instead, **readings will be selected and posted on Blackboard by us (faculty), and discussed in class.** The Blackboard page will have suggested readings about news events, book reviews, and other items/topics you'll find of interest.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 17 11 am	Class 1: Introduction and History of Washington Field Trip: The People's House Museum #cultureDC #historyDC
January 22 6 pm – 7:30 pm	Voluntary Event: D.C. Intern Happy Hour with AEI Senior Fellow Zack Cooper American Enterprise Institute, 1789 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
January 24 11 am	Class 2: Race and Social Justice in Washington, D.C. Field Trip: Ben's Chili Bowl (1 pm) #historyDC #cultureDC
January 31 11 am	Class 3: A Hiring Manager's Guide to LinkedIn with Bill Cocolis Field Trip: National Ballet of China: Chinese New Year, The Kennedy Center Opera House #cultureDC #globalDC
February 3 5 pm	Voluntary Event: Beanpot Semifinal: Boston University vs. Harvard Penn Quarter Sports Taven, 639 Indiana Avenue, NW
February 7 9:30 am	Class 4: Volunteer Event Field Trip: Capital Area Food Bank, Fort Totten #cultureDC #policyDC
February 14 11 am	Class 5: D.C. as the 51st State Guest speaker: Ty Hobson-Powell (1 pm) #historyDC #cultureDC
February 21 11 am	Class 6: The Think Tanks of Washington, D.C. Field Trip: Center for American Progress #careersDC #policyDC
February 26	BU Capitol Hill Reception Field Trip: United States Capitol #policyDC
February 28 11 am	Class 7: The Monument on the Hill Field Trip: Backstage tour of the United States Capitol #policyDC #careersDC
March 7 11 am	Class 8: Research and Analysis

	Field Trip: The Library of Congress #historyDC #careersDC
March 11	BU Pardee Alumni Network Event Field Trip: Bracewell LLP #policyDC #careersDC
March 14	Spring Break
March 21 11 am	Class 9: Internship Check-in and Career Development Workshop Field Trip: Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument #careersDC #policyDC
March 28 11 am	Class 10: Washington, D.C. as a Global City Field Trip: Organization for American States #globalDC #careersDC
April 4 10:30 am	Class 11: Lobbying and Alum Panel Field Trip: BU Federal Relations
April 11 11 am	Class 12: Emerging Technologies and U.S. National Security Field Trip: Special Competitive Studies Project #globalDC #careersDC
April 19 11 am	Class 13: Over, under or Through – But Never Around Field Trip: Rock Creek Park #historyDC
April 25 9:30 am	Class 14: How to Build Upon Your Washington Semester Event: Mock Interview Sessions #careersDC
May 2 6 pm	Semester Send Off

CLASS POLICIES

Please inform us as early as possible if you absolutely need to miss a class (or, field trip) so that arrangements can be made and that your grade is not impacted. Late work is penalized unless appropriate justification is provided. Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if their intention to be absent from class is due to religious observance or something family-related. **If you can avoid it, do not miss class or any Friday Field trip.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The BU Academic Conduct Code states “All students entering Boston University are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity.” It defines academic misconduct as such: “Academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic accomplishments, or impedes other students’ opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work.”

For more, see: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers. Students are expected to present accommodation letters to faculty members within the first few weeks of the semester.

For more, see: <http://www.bu.edu/disability/>

SECURITY

In case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. Please follow the evacuation procedures for the building wherever class is meeting.



**NEVER BE
SILENT.**