

The Evergreen State College

Legislative Policy

A 4-credit elective in the
Master of Public Administration Program
Fall Quarter, 2013

Instructor: Karen Fraser, Washington State Senator
Contact information: karenfrasertesc@comcast.net and 360-250-6261

Class Location: Seminar II Building, Room A-2107

Schedule

Weekend 1: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday --- October 4, 5, and 6.

Weekend 2: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday --- November 15, 16, and 17

Times: Fridays 5-9; Saturdays and Sundays 9-5.

~ ~ ~

INFORMATION BELOW:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Learning goals. The overall goal is for students to achieve an introductory understanding of the legislative process, with a focus on the state legislative process, using Washington State as the example. Students will learn how to research the legislative history of a bill. A discussion of the political context of the legislative process will include the fundamental importance of federal and state constitutions, the role of elections, and relationships with national, tribal, and local governments.

Discussion will also include an overview of formal and informal rules and procedures of the state legislative process, advocacy strategies, citizen access, political accountability, relationships with the executive and judicial branches of state government, and major influences on legislative outcomes. Numerous highly experienced guests will visit with students.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Friday, October 5. Introduction to class. Introduction to the legislative process.

Saturday, October 6. Political accountability and citizen involvement: elections, political parties, campaigning, public disclosure laws, citizen access to legislative process, news media, how to research the legislative history of a bill.

Sunday, October 7. Interest groups and lobbying, the role of the Public Disclosure Commission, the Legislature's relationship to the governor and the executive branch, the Legislature's relationship to the judicial branch, Legislature's relationship to tribal governments.

Friday, November 15. The role of a legislator in the legislative process.

Saturday, November 16. Relationship of the Legislature to local governments, role of legislative staff, the legislative budget process.

Sunday, November 17. Student presentations of their draft legislative history case studies.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

Assignments

The most significant assignment: Prepare a written case study on the history of a state legislative proposal, applying and analyzing concepts reviewed in class and tips on how to research the history of a bill.

Other assignments:

- Reading and thinking about selected documents provided by the instructor,
- Becoming acquainted with a variety of websites relating to the legislative process,
- Attending at least two legislative meetings and preparing summary reports about them,
- Taking either a guided or self-guided tour of the State Capitol Campus,
- Following a variety of news media coverage of legislative activity and preparing a written comparison and evaluation of them,
- Providing summary feedback to the instructor on class presentations, and
- Engaging in class discussions.

No formal textbooks are assigned.

Due dates

Prior to Weekend 1 (By October 2)

- 1) Send memo to instructor covering:
 - a) What prompts your interest in taking this class,
 - b) What your background is, if any, in legislative or other governmental or political processes, and
 - c) What you hope to learn from the class.
- 2) Read documents to be emailed by instructor.
- 3) Browse through a variety of websites recommended by instructor via email.
- 4) Begin considering what legislative issue might be the subject of your case study. (Information regarding case study assignment will be emailed to students prior to Weekend 1.)
- 5) Begin selecting several news media to follow during the course. Instructor will email some suggestions. Should include a *variety* among print, online, TV, radio, etc. Provide brief oral report to class during Weekend 1.

Weekend 1 – Friday, Saturday, Sunday --- October 4, 5, 6

- 1) Report orally to the class what news sources you propose to follow during the course.

October 13

- 1) Submit 1-3 page memo to instructor advising which assigned documents you read and which websites you reviewed, describing your reactions to and evaluations of them.
- 2) Submit 1-2 page memo to instructor providing evaluation of and commentary on class sessions during Weekend 1.

November 1

- 1) Submit a 1 page memo to instructor advising of your probable selection of a legislative case study and a brief summary to your approach to undertaking it.

Weekend 2 --- November 15, 16, 17

- 1) Advise class of your probable case study selection.
- 2) Make oral summary progress report to class on case study, on Sunday, November 17.

November 20, 21, 22 --- Attend some Legislative Assembly meetings at State Capitol

Begin preparation of reports on process and substance of the meetings.

December 2

- 1) Submit 1-3 page memo to instructor providing evaluation of and commentary on class sessions during Weekend 2.

December 10 – 12 (Contact instructor if another date is requested.)

- 1) Deadline for media comparison and evaluation paper.
- 2) Deadline for reports of legislative meetings attended.
- 3) Deadline for diary of self-guided tour of campus (if didn't tour with instructor).
- 4) Deadline for written case study.

E N D