

## **POLS4803 – POLITICAL SCIENCE PRACTICUM INFORMATION PACKET**

\*\* Prerequisite: Department Head Approval

### **Application Process:**

- A. In the semester prior to the semester that they would like to do their practicum, students will begin to explore potential sites and volunteer opportunities.
- B. After finding a site and securing a site supervisor, students will select a faculty mentor who will approve their site and guide them through the practicum experience.
- C. Students will submit the following to the department head:
  1. a completed application form with the information about the site, their faculty mentor's signature
  2. a professional resume, approved by the faculty mentor
  3. a job description
  4. their checksheet, printed from the RMU website

### **Faculty Mentors:**

Dr. Justin DePlato  
deplato@rmu.edu  
Wheatley Center, 226

Dr. Judit Trunkos  
trunkos@rmu.edu  
Wheatley Center, 331

### **Interim Department Head:**

Dr. Soren Fanning  
fanning@rmu.edu  
412-397-5403  
Wheatley Center, 213

# POLITICAL SCIENCE PRACTICUM APPLICATION

The purpose of the Political Science Practicum (POLS4803) is to provide Political Science majors with a relevant career learning experience and enable them to combine academic study and practical experience for academic credit. Students interested in registering for the Practicum must submit a **completed application, current resume approved by the faculty mentor, a checklist printed from the RMU website, and a job description** to the Department Head.

Please print clearly or word process.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle Initial)

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cumulative Grade Point Average: \_\_\_\_\_ Cumulative Credits Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Term in which you plan to do the Practicum: \_\_\_\_\_

## Practicum Placement Information:

Agency/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person at site: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## Faculty Mentor:

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand my responsibilities for the Practicum as described in the Psychology Practicum Syllabus and agree to comply with them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
Academic Department Head Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approve                       Disapprove

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE PRACTICUM (POLS4803)**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

POLS4803 Under the guidance of a political science faculty member, the student will complete 120 hours of documented experience of a practicum at a university-approved site. The student's experience may be a volunteer or paid position that is directly related to the field of political science. Participation in professional activities allows students to experience the work environment in their chosen field, make informed career choices, and enhance their employment credentials. These experiences reinforce the connection between the classroom and the diverse workplaces that employ sociologists through the application of classroom theories to actual occupational problems. This course requires 120 hours on site, as well as the completion of the academic requirements established by the Department of Social Sciences.

3 credits

Prerequisite: 90 credits, Department Head Approval

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES/GOALS**

Upon successful completion of this course, each student will have the ability to:

1. demonstrate an ability to work effectively with professionals beyond RMU.
2. acquire specialized information, both theoretical and practical, about topics of particular interest to political scientists.
3. apply knowledge gained in the classroom to diverse professional responsibilities and situations.
4. develop an awareness of and appreciation for the diverse and multiple employment opportunities provided by a political science major.
5. gain field-related experience and develop a professional network.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

#### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are required to complete 120 hours of documented experience in a university-approved volunteer or paid position. Students must establish a schedule with their site supervisor and report to the site on EVERY agreed-upon day. Students are to maintain a record of completed hours by completing the Psychology Practicum Timesheet(s). In the event of illness or emergency, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Site Supervisor and the faculty advisor. It is also the responsibility of the student, in consultation with the Site Supervisor, to schedule additional visits to fulfill the 120 hours required for the Practicum.

#### **Academic Integrity**

**Academic Integrity Policy:** The fundamentals of Academic Integrity are valued within the Robert Morris University community of scholars. All students are expected to understand and adhere to the standards of Academic Integrity as stated in the RMU Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found on the RMU website

at [www.rmu.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.rmu.edu/academicintegrity). Any student who violates the Academic Integrity Policy is subject to judicial proceedings which may result in sanctions as outlined in the Policy. Depending upon the severity of the violation, sanctions may range from receiving a zero on an assignment to being dismissed from the university. If you have any questions about the policy, please consult your course instructor.

The Social Sciences Department strongly supports the RMU Academic Integrity Policy. Students should be aware that all violations, including minor infractions, will be reported to the Robert Morris University Academic Integrity Committee. Further, in compliance with the RMU Undergraduate Repeating Courses Policy, students who have not attained the minimum passing grade for courses required in their program of study after three attempts may be dismissed from the programs in the Social Sciences Department. Because the social science programs emphasize interactions with others, our majors represent and reflect a critical aspect of reputation for our department, our school, and more broadly, Robert Morris University. A large part of that reputation has to do with the ethical behaviors of our graduates which impact trust. Consequences of actions that violate the ethical and trust-based behaviors we expect of majors representing our department can range from counseling regarding issues of academic integrity to permanent expulsion from the program or the department.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism, taking someone else's words or ideas and representing them as your own, is expressly prohibited by Robert Morris University. Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Student academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Copying the work on another during an examination or turning in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Copying from books, magazines, or other sources, including Internet or other electronic databases like ProQuest and InfoTrac, or paraphrasing ideas from such sources without acknowledging them;
- Submitting an essay for one course to a second course without having sought prior permission from your instructor;
- Giving a speech and using information from books, magazines, or other sources or paraphrasing ideas from sources without acknowledging them;
- Knowingly assisting others in the dishonest use of course materials such as papers, lab data, reports and/or electronic files to be used by another student as that student's own work.
- NOTE on team or group assignments: When you have an assignment that requires collaboration, it is expected that the work that results is credited to the team unless individual parts have been assigned. However, the academic integrity policy applies to the team as well as to its members. All outside sources must be credited as outlined above.

Students in this class and in all courses are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are behaviors that are inconsistent with standards of academic integrity. Students/candidates are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's work ideas, or words without giving the author credit for using them. This can mean many things, including downloading papers from the Internet, using a friend's paper, inaccurately quoting or paraphrasing ideas or words from a text. In the academic community, people earn their living through the use of their work ideas, and words. Their reputation is built, in part, by others using their ideas and giving credit to the author. Therefore, you have the responsibility, both legal and ethical, to cite their work properly. Plagiarism is a major offence in the academic community of which you are a part. Students/candidates who commit blatant acts of plagiarism will fail the course and may be required to present a defense to be allowed to continue in the department.

**Special Learning or Physical Accommodations Policy:** Students who may be eligible to receive learning support or physical accommodations must contact the Center for Student Success at 412-397-4349 to schedule an appointment with a counselor and to learn more about accommodation procedures. To receive accommodations in this course, arrangements must be made through the Center for Student Success (Nicholson Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor).

## Course Requirements:

### 1. Journals

Students are required to keep a daily log of their experiences and compose a weekly reflection paper. Journals should be submitted via email or Blackboard at the end of each week.

- a. Daily Entries: For each day you work at your practicum site, list the number of hours worked, a description of daily responsibilities and duties, and a brief paragraph reflecting on that day's experiences.
- b. Weekly Reflections: How are your experiences consistent with or different from the content you learned in your course work? How has your understanding of political science evolved/ changed/ been supported by your experiences? What did you experience this week that was interesting? How have you grown professionally through this experience?

Goal-Setting Journal Entry: In your first journal entry, you will describe your practicum placement and think about the objectives you have for this experience. In two single-spaced typed pages, address the following: What kinds of expectations do you have for your involvement at the practicum site? How do you imagine your training in the field of political science will come into play in the work you will be doing? How do you expect your involvement at this site will assist you in your own career development? What are you hoping to get from this experience? What do you hope to offer the site and community? Set some concrete goals for the semester and describe the steps you will take to meet these goals.

## 2. Faculty-Student Conferences

Approximately three times during the semester, the student and faculty mentor will meet to review and process the practicum experience as well as evaluate progress toward completion of course requirements. These meetings will be based upon the student's practicum schedule and progress through the semester.

The topics discussed will include, but not be limited to:

- a. Review of journal entries to date.
- b. Review of pre-planning and drafts for final paper.

## 3. Final Evaluation Paper/Project

Compare and contrast your experience in the Practicum with the theories and information that you learned in relevant course work. Topics will be chosen in consultation with the faculty advisor and will be appropriate to the student's area of interest.

Requirements:

- The paper must be a minimum of 10 pages with an appropriate list of citations correctly utilizing APA style of documentation.
- 1<sup>st</sup> page- Describe the site and why you chose it
- Pages 2-8- Describe the type of experiences the practicum provided and how they connect to relevant theories, concepts, or other course-related information.
- This is the section of the paper where you analyze your practicum experience as it explicitly relates to concepts, theories, and content in political science. You must identify and define the concepts, theories and ideas your selected and apply the experiences at your practicum to them.
- Pages 8-10 – Reflect on what you have gained from this experience, especially whether you met the goals your set out in the first goal-setting essay. Did you learn anything about your strengths as a professional? Did the experience alter your career goals? How did this experience influence your current career path? Do you want to continue working with this population? If not, how did this experience shape where you are headed next in your professional development?

4. Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience

The student will complete in detail the Student Evaluation of Practicum Experience form. The student will make recommendations for future students that may consider completing a Practicum at the same site.

5. Submission of Evaluation Forms

- a. Supervisor Evaluation Form
- b. Student Evaluation of Site Form
- c. Timesheet initialed by Site Supervisor

**A grade will not be assigned for the Practicum if students fail to submit all completed forms.**

**Grading:**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 15% | Required Conferences with Faculty Supervisor. |
| 15% | Site Supervisor's Evaluation.                 |
| 30% | Completed Journal.                            |
| 40% | Final Evaluation Paper/Project.               |







**Robert Morris University**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**Student Evaluation of Political Science Practicum Experience**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Division/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is designed to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of your Practicum experience at this organization. We believe that students who participate in the Practicum are the most qualified to provide us with feedback about the value of the experience. Your candid responses to these questions are greatly appreciated.

Please rate the program based on the following criteria and check one under each category.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERVISOR**

- Greatly exceeded expectations
- Exceeded expectations
- Met expectations
- Below expectations

**OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS**

- Greatly exceeded expectations
- Exceeded expectations
- Met expectations
- Below expectations

**INTERACTIONS WITH COLLEAGUES**

- Greatly exceeded expectations
- Exceeded expectations
- Met expectations
- Below expectations

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (SETTING)**

- Greatly exceeded expectations
- Exceeded expectations
- Met expectations
- Below expectations

**ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM – OVERALL RATING**

- Very Satisfied       Satisfied       Somewhat Satisfied       Not Satisfied

Would you recommend this Practicum position to other students?       Yes       No

What advice would you give to students considering a Practicum with this organization?

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RMU DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MENTOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT AT SITE FORM

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

SITE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ADVISOR/MENTOR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly summarize the activities expected of the student.

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Briefly summarize the quality of the student's performance at the site.

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Are there any skills required which are not demonstrated by the student? How do you think the deficiency could be eliminated?

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Additional Comments:

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