



## **Boston University Study Abroad London**

### **Boston University Study Abroad London Politics Track - Internship Seminar Spring 2016**

#### **Instructor Information**

A. Name	Dr Mohammad Nafissi
B. Days and Times	Seminar 1: Thursday 11 February, part of PO221/IR 359 class Seminar 2: Monday 14 March, 6.15 pm- 7.45pm Seminar 3: Tuesday 5 April, 6.15pm-7.45pm Location: Brompton Room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
C. BU Telephone	020 7244 6255
D. Email	<a href="mailto:nafissim@bu.edu">nafissim@bu.edu</a> ; <a href="mailto:nafissim@gmail.com">nafissim@gmail.com</a>
E. Office hours	By appointment

#### **Aims**

These seminars aim to (a) ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the internship's assignments, and (b) to provide a forum for discussing issues and questions that may arise in the course of your internships. Please note that your grade in this course is Not based on evaluations of your performance by your internship supervisors and colleagues. Instead, I assess your own reflections on the internship as articulated with the help of appropriate sources in the three assignments outlined below. The University requires an academic grading based on the usual criteria, although these will be applied with the particular features of this course in mind. The assignments are related and grow in scope and weight. Thus the first two assignments may be seen as steps leading to the third as well as distinct exercises which are individually assessed. At each tutorial we will discuss the objectives of the next piece of work in view of your own experience and suggestions.

If you wish to compile a portfolio of work from your placement, that is fine and should be helpful in terms of deepening your learning experience and preparations for the assignments, but it is not a requirement and will not be assessed. Remember that attendance is mandatory, and **10%** of the final grade will be awarded for attendance and participation at the tutorials. Ideally, you should be able to draw as appropriate on the knowledge gained in the British Political Institutions course (or other pertinent courses) in completing your assignments. However, what many of you are asked to do in the course of the internships cannot be anticipated fully in advance or directly related to the issues explored in BPI. This is of course taken into account when evaluating your work for this course. Moreover, much of what you do may be of a 'practical' nature and significant issues may arise through interpersonal aspects of your internship. Such experiences, and the skills developed through them will serve you in whichever career(s) you choose, and should therefore be considered and evaluated in your assignments.

## Assignments

**Assignment 1:** at the second meeting, you will give a brief presentation about their organization and tasks, together with any critical and constructive reflections about your experience so far. The presentation should be about five minutes long and will be assessed on a **pass/fail basis**. After the presentations at the second seminar, there will be a discussion of any other remaining question arising from your experience of the internships.

This assignment counts as 10% of the final grade and is **due at the 2<sup>nd</sup> seminar**.

**Assignment 2:** this will take the form of a paper, of not more than 1,500 words, analyzing and evaluating a specific project you have undertaken at work. The essay should describe the project in appropriate detail and critically assess it. You need to have your choice approved by me. In the unlikely case that no appropriate project can be found, a separate arrangement will be decided. Such questions will be fully resolved by or at the second tutorial. Issues arising from the project papers and other aspects of the internship will be discussed at the last seminar.

This assignment counts as 30% of the final grade and is **due at the 3<sup>rd</sup> seminar**.

**Assignment 3:** the final paper will take the form of a 2,500-word essay critically and constructively assessing various aspects of your internship. The paper will be written as a clearly structured report with **appropriate headings and references**. This assignment will be discussed further during the third seminar in the light of your internship experience. However, the following guideline should be of help in focusing your attention on some key issues from the outset as well as indicate the general aims of this assignment.

The report will analyse and draw conclusions about the organisation's role and achievement, or non-achievement of its objectives. Your account should include descriptive, critical, and constructive dimensions. Comparative discussion of the internship with reference to your previous similar experiences, should you have them, too, is welcome. The conclusions may draw as appropriate on factual material, quotes from interviews with co-workers, and the output of the organization as well as academic sources, political party and other websites, and mass media (including the main textbook and other sources mentioned in the British Political Institutions' syllabus or additionally posted on Blackboard).

The paper should address (but need not be limited to) the following:

1. Summarize the work done by you and the organisation during your placement.
2. Contextualize your placement through analysis of pertinent current events.
3. Discuss any aspect of the British Political Institutions that you may have further explored in any form during the internship.
4. Identify and examine the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.
5. Put yourself in the position of a consultant. What recommendations would you make to the organization in which you interned? What recommendation would you make to BU regarding the process through which your internship was chosen and the support you received during the period of internship?
6. Present your personal conclusions about the placement in terms of what you have accomplished and its possible impact on your choice of future career and understanding of British politics and, more generally, alternative political orientations and value hierarchies. Here you may consider whether your views have undergone any changes since these issues were first examined in the second session of the Politics course.

The mark received for this assignment counts as 60% of the final grade. **Deadline: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 9:00AM to be handed in to the Student Affairs Office.**

## **Grading**

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

*\* Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

## **Attendance**

### **Classes**

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme. This may result in the student having to take a medical leave of absence from the programme or withdraw from the programme.

#### *Authorised Absence:*

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible). **Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness (first day of sickness): If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- Illness (multiple days): If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

**The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.**

#### *Unauthorised Absence:*

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

## *Lateness*

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

## **Seminars**

### **Seminar 1: Thursday 11 February**

General overview and discussion of the internships and the assignments.

### **Seminar 2: Monday 14 March**

Each student to present a short introductory paper, followed by discussion of issues raised. Details of the requirements for the project paper will also be discussed.

### **Seminar 3: Tuesday 5 April**

Submission of project papers followed by discussion of issues raised therein and other questions to do with the progress of the internships. The objectives of the final paper and related questions will also be discussed in this session.

## **Sources**

Your colleagues and the material produced by your workplace as well as your own direct observations and reflections as well as interviews and conversation with your colleagues are this course's primary sources. The suggested readings, notes, websites, mass media in the British Political Institutions syllabus and the sources and links posted on Blackboard should be consulted as required. Further sources may be suggested during the period of internship.