



**Boston University Study Abroad
London**

**Boston University Study Abroad London
Politics Track - Internship Seminar
Spring 2018**

Instructor Information

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| A. Name | Dr Mohammad Nafissi |
| B. Days and Times | Seminar 1: Wednesday 14 February, 5.45 pm-7.15pm
Seminar 2: Tuesday, 6 March, 5.45 pm-7.15pm
Seminar 3: Tuesday 27 March, 4.30- 6pm
Seminar 4: Wednesday 18 th April, 10-11.30 am
Location: |
| C. BU Telephone | |
| D. Email | |
| E. Office hours | By appointment |

Aims

These seminars aim to (a) ensure that you are well 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 these seminars in mind. The assignments are related and grow in weight culminating in the final and most comprehensive one. Each assignment, however, is self-standing and will be graded accordingly.

If you wish to compile a work portfolio, 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 you are all expected to participate actively in the seminars. 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 as well as examined in the seminars as appropriate.

Assignments

Assignment 1: at the second meeting, you will give a brief presentation about your organization and tasks, together with any critical and constructive reflections that you may have, including the extent to which your prior expectations were met, disappointed, or improved upon in fact. The presentation should be about five minutes long and will be assessed on a **pass/fail basis**. After the presentations, there will be a discussion at the second seminar about any other remaining questions arising from your experience of the internships so far.

This assignment counts as 10% of the final grade and is **due at the 2nd seminar (6 March)**.

Assignment 2: this will take the form of a book review, of not more than 1,500 words. The book should be chosen on the advice of your internship supervisor with a view of enhancing your internship experience and knowledge of the related fields. You need to have my approval before proceeding with the assignment. Any questions related to this assignment and other aspects of the internship will be discussed at the second seminar.

This assignment counts as 20 % of the final grade and is **due at the 3rd seminar (27 March)**.

Assignment 3: this will take the form of a brief oral presentation (around five minutes) reporting on an event related to one or more aspects of the internship that you have attended on the advice or with the approval of your supervisor.

This (P/F) assignment counts as 10 % of the final grade and is **due at the fourth seminar (17 April)**.

Assignment 4: 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**. At the fourth session on Tuesday **17 April**, any questions related to this assignment will be discussed and internship as a whole will be reviewed.

The mark received for this assignment counts as 60% of the final grade and is due for submission to the Student Affairs Office by or before 4 pm on **Monday 23 April**.

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 mission 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 the book chosen for review, academic sources, pertinent websites, and mass media (including the main textbook and other sources mentioned in the British Political Institutions' syllabus or posted on Blackboard).

The report 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 with reference to pertinent current political events.
3. Discuss any aspect of the British Political Institutions that you may have further explored in any form (including in discussions with colleagues) 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.

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 fulfil 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 Authorized 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: Wednesday 14 February

General overview and discussion of the internships and the assignments.

Seminar 2: Tuesday 6 March

Presentation of a short overview of each internship, followed by discussion of issues raised.

Seminar 3: Tuesday 27 March

Submission of the book review. Discussion of issues raised therein and questions to do with the progress of the internships and the remaining assignments.

Seminar 4: Tuesday 17 April

Presentation of short reports on the event attended at the suggestion of internship supervisors. Discussion of the final assignment and review of the course.

Sources

Your colleagues and the material produced by your workplace, your own direct observations and reflections, and interviews and conversation with your colleagues are this course's primary sources. These also include the book and other sources recommended by your supervisor. The suggested readings, notes, websites, mass media in the British Political Institutions syllabus and the sources and links posted on Blackboard should be consulted and appropriately referenced for contextualization and discussion of pertinent current events, and theoretical and empirical purposes as necessary. Further sources may be suggested during the period of internship.