

**Internship Program at the European Union and Political Associations**  
**Brussels, Belgium**  
**Vesalius Classroom**  
**Time: Thurs, 7-9:30**

**Dr. Brandon Inabinet**  
**Dr. Richard Letteri**  
**Fall 2017**

---

### **Course Objective**

This internship course gives students practical experience in the European Parliament and other international organizations based in Brussels, Belgium. It also offers an opportunity for critical reflection on that experience and provides a link to academic understandings explored in IDS-372. The course is worth six credits.

### **Course Readings**

John McCormick. (2011). *Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction*.

### **Course Responsibilities and Requirements**

- 1) Be up-to-date and conversant on the news and general environment in which you will work, especially specific news or updates emailed by Dr. Inabinet and Dr. Letteri and EPA.
- 2) Show *extreme* diligence in all internship related appointments and activities.
- 3) Be able to make critical assessments about working in a European context, issues or problems related to your internship and the EU, and differences and similarities between US and European political institutions and practices.

### **Course Exam**

You will be asked to read McCormick's *Understanding the European Union* before traveling to Brussels. The exam will be taken shortly after arrival and constitute 20% of your final grade.

### **Course Internship**

Students will participate in an internship approximately 25 hours per week under the supervision of Educational Programmes Abroad (EPA) and participate in other activities sponsored by EPA. Our EPA director, your site supervisor, and your professors will determine schedules and responsibilities for your internship. Your supervisor's evaluation will constitute 20% of your final grade.

### **Interest Group and Individual Discussions**

Students will be divided into discussion groups according to internship assignments and areas of interest. These informal small group discussions will take place on a regular basis in places chosen by the professor. You will also meet periodically on an individual basis with your professors. Lastly, you will be asked from time-to-time to contribute blog posts that demonstrate growth; every student should write at least one blog post relating to their internship for evaluation by midterm. Your posting, promptness, capacity for intelligent reflection, and willingness to address issues raised during these discussions will constitute 20% of

your final grade. (See advice below on blogging.)

## **Digital Internship Portfolio & Internship Presentation**

Your digital portfolio will consist of:

- a. a resume showing the student's work at the internship site
- b. a 2-3 page explanation of the institution where you are conducting your internship (its history, responsibilities, functions, goals, etc.) and your internship responsibilities.

This should include a formal paragraph on the organization's history and background, a formal paragraph about its mission or goals, and a formal paragraph about the position you've been given within an organizational structure/hierarchy (titles [and potentially names] of who you report to, who manages your time, how many people in the organization have positions similar to yours). Include a paragraph listing (with some attention to ranking/prioritizing) your learning objectives from the reflection survey at the beginning of the semester and how you accomplished them.

- c. a final evaluation from the worksite supervisor.
- d. a log of the dates and time spent at the worksite along with a description of the duties performed and/or training (in software, technologies, etc.) on those particular days. Each entry should provide a brief description (five sentences) of the activities the intern performed each day
- e. a copy of selections (newsletters, news reports, inner-office memos, videos, translations, etc.) produced by intern during the internship along with a brief description that explains the work the intern did on each entry

A ten-minute presentation on the internship that will be given during the final class meeting. The presentation should give a general explanation of the internship site (see above) and of your internship responsibilities. It should also focus on at least one particular aspect or project of the internship. Your digital internship portfolio and presentation of it will constitute 20% of your final grade each.

### **Tentative Schedule**

**Weeks 1 - 2:** Friday meeting on August 25 to take the EU exam and discuss internship class requirements and any remaining questions about internship sites. First normal class on August 31 to review EU tests and fill knowledge gaps.

**Weeks 3 - 7:** Individual and group meetings with Dr. Inabinet to discuss internships, the European Union, European political, social, cultural issues, etc.

**Week 8:** Class meeting with Dr. Letteri for update for general update on internships.

**Weeks 9 – 12:** Individual and group meetings with Dr. Letteri to discuss internships, the European Union, European political, social, cultural issues, etc.

**Weeks 13-17:** Class meetings to discuss and give final presentations and submit portfolios.

Blogging about your Internship: Please attempt to do all of the following

1. Narrative of Experiences: Tell richly layered, true stories about your experiences. Use vivid detail without artificiality (no excessive adverbs, obtuse vocabulary).
2. Deep Knowledge of the Institution and Workplace: A clear knowledge of how protocol that affects you came about (historically), becomes instituted in practice (organizationally), and how the culture in your workplace responds (culturally).
3. Connections with the Broader Program: Insights from IDS-371, group travel, or independent travel.
4. Relevant contemporary political, social, or economic news: Make reference to some world/national/local event or public issue to reflect awareness.
5. Cite Relevant Material: You will not have parenthetical or footnotes, so cite your materials using the equivalent of oral citations: "According to a [BBC report](#) from January of 2012, seventy percent of Europeans say . . ." with links to those materials. A good post will likely have at least a citation per paragraph.
6. Be Interesting: Include relevant images of yourself, develop a written persona that is engaging.
7. Make a Connection to or Draw a Generalization from another student's posts.

Avoid these common higher-level college writing mistakes:

1. Losing Agent-Community Relationship in Voice:
  - a. Casual passive constructions: "Things are being learned." Instead, try to think about *who* is doing *what* to *whom*, *where*, *when*, and *why*.
  - b. Using "I/my/mine" to the extent that the post becomes narcissistic/solipsistic, such as "I think" or "I feel" starting most sentences.
2. Vague/non-applicable terms (*without immediate specification*):
  - a. Of sourcing: Some say, many say, experts say, It has been said that
  - b. Of categorizing: All/Every or None/Nobody
  - c. Dead metaphors/clichés
3. Grammatical problems:
  - a. Comma splice and run-on sentences
  - b. Punctuation errors (period *inside* quotation marks, for example)
  - c. Correctly italicizing or using quotation marks for various sources.
  - d. Acronyms (other than EU, US, or similar) not spelled out the first time used in each post.
4. Insensitive/Inaccurate Descriptors
  - a. Bad geography: America (in reference to the United States), confusing city/region/nations
  - b. Confusing EU details and/or European institutions, processes
  - c. The people (instead of "citizens of X," or naming specific social groups)
  - d. Objectifying terms: "The gays/Hispanics/whites" (rather than using as adjectives)
5. Terms that diminish the reader (anytime writing could be followed follow with, "you idiot"):
  - a. Clearly, obviously, everyone knows
  - b. As I said before, As already well covered in a previous section/post

*Ideas for Earlier Entries:* How do you decipher the history and mission of the organization? What's in the stated documents or organizational charts versus institutional/cultural perceptions or activities? Who are the "power players" and who gets the work accomplished? Is the workplace formal or informal and by what standards?

*Ideas for Middle Entries:* What issues tend to be most important week after week? What problems tend to recur and do you see mistakes in solving them from your perspective? How do these events affect the daily activities and conversations in the office? How are external media or political groups perceived in the office?

*Ideas for Later Entries:* Have you come to any conclusions instigated by previous posts, or by other participants' posts? What is your overall evaluation of the organization (in the broader community or world) or workplace (compared to others)? What has been the overall effectiveness of the internship in meeting your reflection survey's goals for growth?