

New York State Assembly Intern Program  
2025 Session Internship - Course Syllabus

**IN THE HALLS OF POWER:  
POLITICS AND POLICY IN THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

<b>Course Instructors</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Professor-In-Residence Dr. Don Boyd	donboyd5@gmail.com	104A Concourse	(518) 455-4704
Professor-In-Residence Dr. Angela Ledford	ledforda@nyassembly.gov	104A Concourse	(518) 455-4704
Professor-In-Residence Dr. Janet Penksa	penksaj@nyassembly.gov	104A Concourse	(518) 455-4704
Deputy Director Nick Thony, ABD	thonyn@nyassembly.gov	104A Concourse	(518) 455-4704

**Canvas Link:** <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/9627944>  
(Use this link above, do not go directly to Canvas)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The academic portion of the New York State Assembly Internship Program is designed to enhance and reinforce the analytical, communication, and professional skills Interns develop through their semester-long, immersive legislative experience. Using the legislature as our classroom, and New York State politics and policy as course materials, our Professors-in-Residence will guide Interns through the weekly activities of state government.

By participating in structured class discussions, engaging with assigned readings, and producing various work products, including a major research paper based on a policy of the student's choosing, each Intern will gain a greater understanding of the legislative process.

This course is intended to help Interns understand the environment in which they are working and to appreciate the differences and decisions that allow for consensus and the passage of legislation. Understanding this process will inform Interns as to the most effective way to research and communicate in a legislative setting.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- How to critically evaluate policy
- The role of politics in the New York State legislative process
- How to write effectively on diverse and complex subjects
- Develop a professional network
- Principles and practices of democracy, citizen participation, equity, and rights
- The impact of global and other powerful forces on the democratic process

**New York State Assembly Intern Program  
2025 Session Internship - Course Syllabus**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Interns will attend three different courses over three three-week cycles. Only one course can be taken in any one cycle and interns will be assigned to courses. These courses are as follows:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Meeting Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Policy Analysis in the Legislative Environment</b>	Professor-In-Residence Don Boyd, PhD	1:00 to 2:30	LOB 711A
<b>Democracy, Citizen Participation, Equity, and Rights</b>	Professor-In-Residence Angela Ledford, PhD	11:00 - 12:30	LOB 711A
<b>Politics and Power in New York State: How History and Geography Shape Politics and Political Action</b>	Professor-In-Residence Janet Penksa, PhD and, Nick Thony, ABD	9:30 - 11:00	LOB 711A

**ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS**

The Internship is designed to give each student a mix of academic coursework, professional skills development, and experience. It includes three components, each graded separately as follows:

<b>Academic Course:</b>	55%
<b>Office Grade:</b>	30%
<b>Practicum/Pod Experience:</b>	15%

Descriptions and requirements for the Office and Practicum/Pod Experiences are provided in the packet of materials each student receives during Orientation.

The 55% for the academic component will be calculated as follows. **Instructions for completing each of the assignments are included in the Academic Packet provided to each Intern.**

- 1. District Characteristics Short Paper (5%):** This assignment will introduce you to the data sources and basic analytical techniques to help Interns understand the characteristics of their member’s districts and the political and policy consequences they drive.
- 2. Research Proposal with Annotated Bibliography (10%):** A research proposal and an annotated bibliography must be submitted and approved by your professor before beginning your final paper.
- 3. Final Research Paper (25%):** This paper is to be an analysis of the specific bill you chose for your research proposal (above). Final papers will be considered for the annual Distinguished Paper Award and publication.
- 4. Participation and Completion of Assignments in Class (15%):** Separate grades will be issued by each professor for each of the three class sections.

**New York State Assembly Intern Program  
2025 Session Internship - Course Syllabus**

**Grading Scale:**

97% - 100%	A+	77% - 79%	C+
93% - 96%	A	73% - 76%	C
90% - 92%	A-	70% - 72%	C-
87% - 89%	B+	60% - 69%	D
83% - 86%	B	59% and Below	F
80% - 82%	B-		

The final class grade will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Note: different colleges and universities have different grading policies. We will recommend a grade, but your academic institution will determine the grade you will receive for the program based on our recommendations. Consult your institution for details.

**There will be no extra credit opportunities for this class.**

**ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

1. Interns must receive at least a “C” (73%) in the academic part of their internship in order to receive a final grade recommendation for the internship. If a student’s overall grade in the academic course is less than a “C,” a report will be sent to the college/ university recommending a failing grade for the Internship, regardless of the office and practicum grades.
2. Late Assignments: Late submissions will be reduced by 10%. Acceptance of assignments more than a week late will be at the discretion of the Professors.
3. Plagiarism: Any student guilty of plagiarism may fail the specific assignment, the entire course and/or the entire Internship Program pursuant to college, university, and Internship Program guidelines. A mandatory academic integrity workshop (plagiarism workshop) will be given at the beginning of the program. Students are responsible to attend this workshop, to understand what constitutes plagiarism, and to know the Intern Program's and their academic institution's penalties for plagiarism.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

Artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT are powerful and important to learn how to use well. But they can provide wrong or misleading information, and when correct they often provide shallow information that needs verification and deep follow-up. They can make it easy to take credit for work that is not your own, a form of plagiarism with severe penalties.

**In Your Office**

Be sure you have your Assemblymember’s permission before using any information in your work products from generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or Claude.

## In Class

In the district characteristics paper, your research paper proposal, and your research paper

1. **You can use AI for background research:**
  - a. Ask preliminary questions such as “Find me peer-reviewed studies on renewable energy trends published after 2020.”
  - b. Find sources or data, provided the tools include proper citations (e.g., Google Scholar, Elicit.org).
  - c. Prepare a preliminary synthesis: “What have academic researchers concluded about the relationship between education spending and student outcomes? What are the areas of agreement and of controversy? What are key papers? Provide proper citations.”
  - d. Give me details and a summary of the political party and regional breakdown of the sponsors of Assembly bill A.12345 (attached), and provide links to your sources.
  - e. **NEVER ASSUME RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS LIKE THESE ARE CORRECT.** Use them as starting points for investigation, similar to Wikipedia.
2. **Writing must be your own:** Do not copy sentences or paragraphs from AI into your paper. All writing must be your own. Use spell-checking and grammar-checking. If an AI tool prepares a first draft of a table, be sure to verify and improve the table and acknowledge the assistance.
3. **Always cite original sources:** Do not use any “facts” from AI tools. Verify against original sources and cite those sources. Do not cite AI as a source. It is neither authoritative nor reproducible.
4. **Transparency:** Disclose the extent of AI assistance, if any.
5. **Originality:** AI should enhance understanding but not replace your intellectual effort or creative contribution.

## In other assignments

Professors may require additional assignments in their sections. These assignments may permit the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT, but GAI use is disallowed unless specifically allowed by the professor. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. GAI is not always accurate. You must verify any facts or statistics independently. As always, you bear responsibility for the validity and usefulness of your work, regardless of any GAI assistance you may have received. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct.

## GENERAL CONDUCT

The following policies and requirements pertain to the academic component, as well as to all other Internship activities:

1. **Professional Conduct:** Interns must be respectful toward speakers, staff, professors, all Assemblymembers, constituents and other interns, in classes (remote or in-person), during issue forums, through e-mails, on the phone, etc. Politics is often very contentious; there are ways to voice a political position while being respectful toward others. Wear appropriate attire.

**New York State Assembly Intern Program  
2025 Session Internship - Course Syllabus**

2. **Classroom Conduct:** Be respectful to one another and practice tolerance for each other's opinions and points of view. Do not text or surf your phones or computer during class. It will be within the professor's discretion to mark you as absent if this occurs.
  
3. **Zoom Conduct:** When attending remote events, interns must observe the following rules:
  - Do not be late to the remote class or event. Be sure your computer and WiFi are working well in advance.
  - Your name should appear in Zoom so that your professors, speakers, and other interns can identify you.
  - Keep your video on at all times, you must be able to be seen and must respond to questions – failure to do so may result in being recorded as absent.
  - Give the speaker your undivided attention – do not text, talk on the phone, watch television, TikTok, YouTube, etc., while in class or on the zoom.
  - Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
  - Behave in remote classes as you would in physical classes – sit at a table or desk and be attired as if you were in the office.
  - Recording the class is permitted only with the permission of the professor and the class.
  - Your professor may impose other rules.
  - Failure to follow any of these codes of conduct may result in being dropped from the Zoom class meeting and not receiving credit for attendance.
  
4. **Revisions:** An assignment cannot be revised and resubmitted once it has been graded.
  
5. **Citations:** Use APA style.
  
6. **Writing and Proofreading:** Good writing skills are crucial for participants in the policy process. Be sure to proofread your papers and assignments carefully. Good organization, excellent writing style, and clarity will improve your grade.
  
7. **Mandatory Attendance:** Perfect attendance for all classes, as well as other Intern Office activities is required. After the first two unexcused absences for the semester, each additional unexcused absence will result in 5% decrease in your academic grade.