

PUBP 2695/4695 GTDC Internship

Purpose & Objectives

The public policy internship is intended to foster learning by supporting active participation and introspection into the internship experience. To receive credit for the course, students will perform their assignments as required by the employer, reflect on their experiences through weekly journal writings, and prepare a final deliverable analyzing their work experiences relative to concepts or theories from the social sciences or policy studies.

Grading Criteria

Students will be awarded grades based on the following criteria:

Employer evaluation	50 percent
Weekly Journal	25 percent
Final Paper	25 percent

General Communications & Professionalization

Students will respond to all emails, and complete all surveys & security forms within 24-48 hours of their sending. Students will follow instructions relevant to their GTDC experience. Students will dress appropriately for work, site visits, and other GTDC activities. Students will provide information regarding their internship, including name and contact information of employer and supervisor (boss). Internship supervisor feedback will be incorporated to evaluate on-the-job performance and areas for improvement.

Weekly Journal

Students will be required to keep a weekly journal. The work environment can be complex and fast paced. A journal will help you understand your role, work, and progress. You should reflect on your tasks, difficulties, insights, your opinions, and reactions, and discuss problems, contradictions, political issues, human behavior, etc. Your perspectives are likely to evolve during the semester. This is a project notebook, where the “project” is both your work and your personal development. You might also include reflections on how classroom learning has provided useful insight into (or is contradicted by) your experience. For example, describe real-life examples of concepts from PUBP 4226 (e.g., market failures, government failures) that you encounter in your internship, observe in the news, or just being in Washington DC.

Rules:

- Your journal should consist of a *single* .docx file in which you add the latest entry below the previous ones, and then resubmit the entire document.
- The file name should be “LastName_FirstName PUBP 2695/4695 Weekly Journal.” Please place this information within the document, at the top (as its title), as well.
- Each weekly entry should have a boldface date as the section title (e.g. “Feb 1, 2026”).
- Each weekly entry should be 150-600 length. Text shall be in 11-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced.
- Journal entries for each week must be submitted electronically to mzak@gatech.edu by **Sunday 11am each week**.
- The penalty for late submissions is 10 percent each day.
- Journal entries will be graded based on timely submission, quality of commentary, and use of proper grammar and punctuation.

Attendance

Students are expected to be present at their assigned place of work each working day as prescribed by the internship supervisor. Students should notify their office if they are unable to report to work during the assigned working hours for any reason, and should document the reasons (e.g., by email notifications) to the supervisor and the faculty advisor.

Final Deliverable

The primary deliverable for this course is a customized paper, presentation, or other work that synthesizes your internship, your course material, and your personal interests. It can be work product that you generate as part of your internship. It can be an independent policy brief or research paper. Consult your professor early and often to decide on its form and content. For the most utility, do *not* treat this as “just another assignment to check-off.” Rather, use it as means to: 1) become more expert in an issue area that interests you; 2) develop a writing sample that can be used for future applications for jobs or graduate schools; 3) network into organizations and individuals for whom you might want to work some day; 4) research a potential career path. The more substantive and the more representative of a high-quality skillset (in research, analysis, and/or communications), the higher grade it will receive. **Due on Tuesday December 8, 2026 @ 5pm.**

AI Policy

Students *may not* use AI when conducting research or writing the initial drafts of *any* materials submitted for a grade. Also, students who conduct research or write at the level of AI may not receive a passing grade.

Plagiarism Policy

In brief, plagiarism is defined, for the purposes of this class, as: copying, borrowing, or appropriating another person’s work **and** presenting it as your own in a paper or oral presentation, deliberately or by accident. Acts of plagiarism will be reported in accordance with the Honor Code. In order to avoid being charged with plagiarism, if you use the words, ideas, phrasing, charts, graphs, or data of another person or from published material, then you must either: 1) use quotation marks around the words **and** cite the source, or 2) paraphrase or summarize acceptably using your own words **and** cite the source. The plagiarism policy is not restricted to books, but also applies to video & audio content, websites, blogs, wiki’s, and podcasts. Plagiarism produced by AI still counts as plagiarism.

Employer Evaluation

At the end of the semester, we will ask your internship supervisor to evaluate you on the following metrics:

- quality and quantity of work
- professionalism and maturity (includes ability to seek out and receive constructive criticism)
- ability to meet deadlines and show up on time
- ability to work with others
- ability to ask questions in order to improve work
- ability to work by themselves without too much coaching (i.e., doesn’t need to be programmed like a computer)

And with this scale in mind:

1. Exceeds expectations (top performer, we would definitely hire if we could)
2. Above average (good worker; with some additional maturity, experience, and/or training could be a top performer)
3. Meets expectations (satisfactory, but did not stand out)
4. Needs work (tried, but was not quite ready for the professional work environment)
5. Below expectations (this student was non-performing, or unprofessional, or irresponsible in some way).

Policies & Regulations

The instructor of record reserves to the right to alter these requirements with reasonable notification of enrolled students.

Georgia Tech Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech Honor Code in these courses, as well as all Institute courses. The complete code can be found online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu>.

Grades

Grades in this course are not rigidly related to numerical scores, distribution functions, predetermined percentages, or your knowledge of academic jargon. As can be seen from the following grade descriptions, individual assignment grading in this course is related more directly to a student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Finally, in determining an

assignment's grade, consideration is given for elegance of presentation, creativity, imagination, and originality *only* where these have been appropriately be called for, and where mastery of the fundamentals has already been demonstrated. A satisfactorily completed individual assignment will receive one of the following grades:

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.

Other grades awarded include:

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. Has not demonstrated familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field. This includes:

- citation of non-existent sources
- citation of an irrelevant source or one that fails to support the claim cited
- blatantly inaccurate facts, data, or quotations
- failure to use the citations guidelines (see handout)
- inability to knowledgably discuss written deliverables
- use of AI in research, analysis, or writing (first drafts)

Note that this course's internal grading system includes plus (+) and minus (-) modifiers for use with the letter grades A, B, C, and D. However, they are not officially part of students' grades, they do not appear on Georgia Tech transcripts, and they do not affect internally or externally reported grade-point averages.