



## WASHINGTON SEMESTER PROGRAM *at* AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

#### A. PROGRAM CONCENTRATIONS

##### Concentration: American Politics

###### **WSEM-415 U.S. Political Institutions**

Students examine the cycle of United States politics and institutions: how candidates get elected; how bills are proposed and passed; how bills are signed into law and executed; and how laws are adjudicated. (4 credits)

###### **WSEM-416 U.S. Politics & Policy**

This course provides students with an empirical understanding of how Washington D.C. works on a daily basis. Students meet with political practitioners and policymakers -- both elected and unelected -- who influence legislation, execute decisions, resolve disputes and help others win electoral office. Students gain understanding of the complexity of the government and "practical politics." (4 credits)

##### Concentration: Foreign Policy

###### **WSEM-417 Contemporary U.S. Foreign Policy**

This course will help students acquire a sound conceptual and practical understanding of the foreign policy challenges that United States policymakers face, and the reasons for and implications of their decisions. The seminar consists of lectures, class discussions, and simulations, as well as briefings by public officials, policy analysts, and others who are involved in the shaping of U.S. foreign policy. (4 credits)

###### **WSEM-418 Global Politics**

This course examines important historical and contemporary themes in global politics that help us understand the key dynamics and institutions of the current international system. This analysis will include studying the role played by the foreign policies of national governments, the multilateral initiatives of inter-governmental institutions, and the advocacy campaigns of non-governmental

organizations. In this context, current international challenges, both global and regional, will be used as case studies to understand and evaluate the adequacy of policy responses by national governments, inter-governmental institutions, and civic sector engagement organizations. (4 credits)

### **Concentration: International Law and Organizations**

#### **WSEM-419 International Peace and Security**

The course will introduce students to the major concepts and issues currently shaping the fields of international security and international peace and conflict studies. In this course students will analyze a variety of contemporary security issues and challenges to peace to gain a better understanding of the threats that states and communities face in the 21st century. Students will explore key challenges to peace and the main strategies for responding to conflicts and learn how to recognize and critique the assumptions upon which these strategies rest. Topics will include classic security concerns ranging from causes of violent conflicts to terrorism, but also a broad range of extended challenges to human security including topics related to environmental, health, gender, and resource security. (4 credits)

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### **Concentration: Global Economics and Business**

#### **WSEM-420 Economic Policy**

This course covers key topics in economic policy, including globalization, foreign direct investment, economic integration, foreign exchange markets, the international monetary system, and the global capital markets. The seminar will be augmented with lectures by guest speakers and site visits to Washington, D.C. institutions and corporations. (4 credits)

#### **WSEM-421 Global Entrepreneurship and Business**

This course provides an overview of issues associated with international business, from both a conceptual and geographical perspective. The seminar is augmented with lectures by invited speakers and visits to Washington, D.C. institutions and corporations. Students understand the issues faced by multinational firms and certain regions and the resources available for studying global entrepreneurship. (4 credits)

## Concentration: Justice and Law

### **WSEM-422 Public Law and Society**

This course exposes students to various social science and legal studies frameworks that explore how the law shapes society, politics, policy, and individuals, and how various social and political institutions shape the law. The course highlights the multiple processes through which law constitutes, regulates, and promotes change in social action, identity, and institutions, as well as how scholars come to understand those processes. This course is ideal for students in the humanities and the social sciences, as well as business, journalism, and the sciences who are interested in exploring various facets of the law. (4 credits)

### **WSEM-423 Criminology and Justice**

This course immerses students in the theory and practice of United States criminal justice and criminal law, through guest speakers, lectures, simulations and class discussion. Students explore academic and professional skills relevant to U.S. criminal justice and criminal law, and gain knowledge of the structure, function, and interrelationship among law enforcement, courts, the adjudicatory system, and corrections. (4 credits)

## Concentration: Journalism

### **WSEM-426 Journalism in Washington**

This course explores the many facets of print, online and broadcast journalism as they exist and are practiced in Washington, D.C. The course studies the people, institutions, and issues of Washington journalism with weekly guest speakers, field trips, readings, discussion sessions, and lectures. (4 credits)

### **WSEM-427 Global Communications**

This course offers an examination of the role of communications and media in an era of socio-economic and political globalization driven in large part by 24/7 information and communication technologies. It introduces students to key technological, political, socio-cultural and economic concepts underlying the infrastructure and application of global media and communication systems. (4 credits)

## Concentration: Sustainable Development

### **WSEM-440 Sustainability and the Environment**

This course explores local, national and global environmental issues, including species conservation, land use, food and agriculture, ocean degradation, climate change, and consumption. The course examines primary actors, key challenges, strategies for making change, and common best practices. Students meet and interact with practitioners who work in the field. (4 credits)

### **WSEM-441 Human Development and Global Issues**

This course explores the complexity of development challenges at local, national, and global levels. Diverse topics include key actors, best practices, inequality, poverty, gender, consumption, conflict, and success stories. Students meet and interact with practitioners who work in the field. (4 credits)

### **Additional Seminars (can be taken in combination with one other seminar above)**

#### **WSEM-424 Community Engagement**

This course is a survey of community problems and policies, with an emphasis on strategies for urban social change. This course seeks to introduce students to theoretical and historical issues that lay the groundwork for domestic social and economic challenges, as well as to make students aware of the global implications of these policies. Students will be asked to learn and evaluate federal, state, and local policies and to develop an understanding of how different groups are impacted by policies. (4 credits)

#### **WSEM-433 Public Health Policy**

This course is designed to familiarize students with concepts and ideas concerning the distribution of health and illness in society, the organization of the health care system, and the relationship of one to the other. Students explore policy tools and regulatory mechanisms that can be used to improve the public health, and examine issues related to evidence, stakeholders, and the processes involved in policymaking and implementation. Students will learn to evaluate government policies and formulate solutions to our most pressing public health challenges, as well as to understand the government's limitations in shaping health policy. (4 credits)

## **B. INTERNSHIP COMPONENT**

**(required to be taken with primary concentration)**

#### **WSEM-491 Washington Semester Internship**

This course is composed of the internship experience and professional development instruction. The class is designed to provide a formal means for students to analyze their internships, explore issues that arise in the workplace in the course of a career, and help students to identify and achieve their long-term academic and professional goals. The course work and assignments will help students reflect analytically on their work at their internship sites, on the internship organization itself, and on issues and topics relevant to their education and career opportunities. (4 credits)

## **C. OPTIONAL EVENING ELECTIVES**

**(can be taken in addition to two seminars and internship course)**

### **WSEM-480 Washington Semester Research Project**

This course offers a unique opportunity for students to conduct intensive analysis on a Washington-based or international topic of interest. This work should complement the knowledge students acquire in the Seminar and Internship components of the Washington Semester Program. (3 or 4 credits)

### **WSEM-380 Political Communication in DC**

This course focuses on political communications, including designing and implementing a media plan and strategy for a political campaign or public policy initiative. The course includes guest speakers working in political communications and site visits to television newsrooms and communication firms. (3 credits)

### **WSEM-381 Write Well and Get Published**

This course is designed to examine the fundamentals of writing in a variety of forms — personal essays, opinion stories, blogs, profiles, features, news, and memoirs. Students will write on topics of their choice and learn how to get published. The emphasis will be on learning to write with a clear and original voice. (3 credits)