

New York State Assembly Graduate Scholars  
Seminar Outline: Winter/Spring 2018  
Topics in State Government

## Instructor Contact

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Office Hours	On Request

## Seminar Information

Regular Date/Time	Thursdays 12:00 pm – 1:30
Room	LOB104a
Semester	Winter/Spring 2018

## Seminar Description

The seminar is designed to provide an introduction to the state legislature and the issues it faces. Special attention will be paid to the governance process and how it relates to local governments and the state's budget and budget process, key to policy formation and implementation. The seminar will also introduce the graduate scholars to the work and work products expected of legislative staff in the New York Assembly.

Scholars are expected to attend a series of 16 seminars. In addition, a mandatory one week orientation covering legislative processes and procedures will be held during the first week of the scholarship period. Scholars are also expected to attend policy meetings ("Speaker's Series) held by the Intern Office on certain Wednesday evenings.

Scholars will also be expected to write professional work products. These will be related to the work of their assigned offices. Scholars will be asked to present their work to their colleagues and participate vigorously during seminar discussions. Over the course of the legislative session, each scholar will also be asked to select a budget/policy issue and lead ongoing class discussions as these issues are deliberated.

Senior legislative officials and Albany "insiders" will be frequently invited to class as guest speakers. Many of these will be former graduate scholars who launched their careers from this position.

Please note we will be flexible with the readings and seminar topics so that our seminar discussions and readings coincide with events at hand.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, each student is expected to:

- Understand how politics and legislative processes influence policy; how issues go from conception to enactment of a law; how and why the budget is known as one of New York's most important policy statements; how governance differs from government and how both interact during the legislative process and in policy formation; and state financial and programmatic policy and implementation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the major work products expected of a professional legislative staffer and the ability to prepare these work products.

## Seminar Topics:

- “What is a good legislature?”
- Introduction to NYS Legislative & Budget Processes
- The Governor's 2017 State of the State & Budget Presentation
- New York State & Local Government: Politics & Conflict
- The NYS Budget: How to Understand the Financial Plan & Other Budget Materials
- Governance & Legislating
- Advocacy, Lobbying & Interest Groups: The Powerful Role of Non-Governmental Actors
- Ethics
- The Federal-State-Local Financial Relationship
- The Negotiation Process
- Public Policy Issues & the Budget
- The Constitution & Courts
- Power & Leadership
- Executive Implementation, Agencies & Bureaucracy
- Budget & Policy Oversight
- Municipal Home Rule & Local Governance
- Political Parties & The Media

## Books and Readings:

The seminar series is intended to provide each scholar with the knowledge base and practical skills

necessary to succeed in government. Students are expected to initiate and complete weekly readings at their own pace. These readings will include current government publications and web resources in addition to those on the reading list below. Many will be provided as they become available. Please note, select chapters from Benjamin (2012), Gray (2012), and Rubin (2014) will be provided by the Intern Office as part of a comprehensive binder of pertinent literature.

Students are also expected to read newspapers to keep abreast of current issues. Daily media recommended are the Albany Times Union and the state sections of other publications, for example, the New York Times, the New York Post, the New York Daily News, and regional newspapers, such as The Buffalo News. Web publications are plentiful. Governing Magazine, City and State and the Empire Page are highly recommended. In addition, viewing Inside Albany at 8pm weeknights on TWC is beneficial and valuable for keeping up to date on state issues and activities.

## Required Books

Rubin, Irene S., (2014). *The Politics of Public Budgeting*, (7th ed.). CQ Press, Washington, D.C.

Smith, Catherine F. (2013) *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process*, 3rd edition, Oxford University

## Supplemental

Benjamin, G. (2012). *The Oxford Handbook of New York State Government and Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Gray, V., Hanson, R. L., & Kousser, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*. Sage.

Pecorella, Robert F., Stonecash, Jeffrey M., editors (2012) *Governing New York State*, Sixth Edition. SUNY Press.

Rosenthal, Alan. (2004) *Heavy Lifting: The Job of the American Legislature*. CQ Press.

Rubin, Irene S., (2014). *The politics of public budgeting*, (7th ed.). CQ Press, Washington, D.C.

Schneier, E. V., Murtaugh, J. B., & Pole, A. (2009) *New York Politics: A Tale of Two States*. ME

Smith, K. B., & Greenblatt, A. (2013). *Governing States and Localities*. CQ Press.

Ward, Robert B. (2006) *New York State Government*, 2nd Edition. Rockefeller Institute Press.

## ***Academic Honesty***

Students are required to adhere to the academic creed of their university and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

## ***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities***

The Assembly is committed to full inclusion for all persons to its educational program and services. Please inform the Intern Office of any special accommodations that may be required.

## ***Other Course Policies***

**Attendance: On-time attendance at all workshops, seminars, and speaker series scheduled by the Intern Office or the Instructor is a mandatory component of each scholar's employment with the Assembly, unless excused by the Intern Office or the Instructor.** If a scholar is unexpectedly confronted with scheduling or any other kind of issue, an excuse from class must be obtained by calling or emailing the Intern Office or the Instructor stating the reason for the absence. Ill health or office scheduling issues are legitimate excuses from seminar attendance.

## ***Class Etiquette***

Arrive at class on time and turn off cell phones during class. Use of cell phones, leaving class early, arriving late, talking during the seminar, text messaging, emailing, and other non-class related use of electronic devices will affect the evaluation of each scholar's performance.

## ***Written Assignments***

It will be imperative that all written communications, whether as part of on-line discussion forums or formal written assignments, be grammatically correct and typo-free. Non-adherence to this policy will affect a student's evaluation. Length and explicit directions for assignments will be discussed in class.

## ***Evaluation***

Evaluation of student performance by the Professor-in-Residence is dependent on attendance, participation, and work products.

## ***Copyright***

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