The Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, D.C. is a full-semester offering for third-year law students. It provides a hands-on complement to the Law School’s more conventional courses in public law, affording students the opportunity to support and engage in first-hand study of Federal Government lawyering at the highest levels.

Admission is by application only. Up to fifteen students will be selected. Rachel Pauley, Director of Government Programs for Social Justice Initiatives and Matthew Gewolb, Senior Career Advisor in Government, will oversee externship placements, including the application process and term-time counseling.

Externs will apply to participating Federal Government law offices on a guided basis, following admission to the program.

This document describes the externship, including the application, selection and placement process. Please read it carefully.

The deadline for applications is Friday, February 13, 2015 at 4 p.m.

For more information, contact:
Deborah Sachare, Coordinator for Government Programs at dsachare@law.columbia.edu
Matthew Gewolb, Senior Career Advisor in Government at mgewol@law.columbia.edu
Rachel Pauley, Director for Government Programs at rachel.pauley@law.columbia.edu
Mandatory Program Components

The Externship will be coterminous with the upperclass Fall 2015 semester. The Externship will include three core components for a total of 12 credits:

Intensive Seminar on Ethics in the Federal Government (1 graded academic credit)
This one week intensive seminar will invite students to explore the unique challenges and responsibilities of ethical law practice in the federal government. Anticipated topics include providing legal advice; identifying attorney-client relationships and working with political clients; statutory and other sources of ethical rules for federal employees; transition between government and related private work; and opportunities for reform. The course will consider several key case studies in-depth and may include presentations from one or more guests.

Although the seminar covers important ethics topics, this seminar is meant to supplement and not replace 3-credit courses offered on campus that satisfy the Law School’s professional responsibility requirement. This course will not satisfy the Law School’s professional responsibility requirement.

Seminar on Federal Government Lawyering (3 graded academic credits)
This substantive weekly seminar will engage students in a critical examination of the multiple roles of lawyers in federal Government offices in D.C. It is expected that some classes will draw heavily on the students’ own experiences and guest speakers. Substantive and reflective writing will be required. Class attendance is mandatory and class participation will be a substantial part of the grade for the seminar. Externs will receive three academic credits for the seminar and the required written work will be eligible to satisfy the JD Minor Writing requirement.

The seminar will have weekly evening meetings, usually on Mondays. Session topics are expected to include: mechanisms for congressional control of the Executive branch, agency general counsels, the White House Counsel’s Office, the President’s relationship to independent agencies, judicial nominations, national security lawyering, and congressional hearing preparation. In addition, students will have three small-group breakout sessions during the term to focus directly on experiences in the field placements.

Field Placements (8 ungraded clinical credits)
Externs will work full time (a minimum of 40 hours per week) at their externship placements for the duration of the fall semester. They will receive eight ungraded clinical credits for successful completion of the field work.
OPTIONAL PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Optional Supervised Research Paper (1-3 credits + eligibility for Major Writing requirement)
Students may elect to write a substantive research paper on a topic closely related to the externship and his or her individual field placement. In addition to graded or ungraded credits, such papers may be used to satisfy the JD Major Writing requirement. Students will be responsible for obtaining their own faculty supervisors for the paper who will advise and grade the work product. Externs choosing this option may wish to develop their topics in consultation with the government agency for which they are working. The JD Rules regarding supervised research papers are applicable and should be consulted.

Optional Satisfaction of Mandatory Pro Bono Credit Hours
Students who extend their externship placements beyond the fall semester can use the additional time toward the 40 hour mandatory pro bono requirement or use it as voluntary pro bono. The appropriate pro bono forms must be filed with Social Justice Initiatives. For more information, please contact Laren Spirer, Director of Pro Bono Programs at laren.spirer@law.columbia.edu.

EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

Students selected for the externship will be counseled about their interests by Matthew Gewolb and Rachel Pauley, and will apply to positions of interest to them through SJI. It is not expected that more than one extern will work in the same office.

Placement supervisors will be leaders in their field who are committed to ensuring a quality learning experience for students and who will collaborate with Columbia faculty to create a learning agenda that complements the seminar. Rachel Pauley will have primary responsibility for coordination with the field placements during the semester. She will meet with students several times and conduct a site visit/meeting with each student and field supervisor in D.C.

A list of potential placements in offices that do substantive legal work and that will provide excellent supervision in the executive and legislative branch and independent agencies of the federal government will be distributed to the externs upon their acceptance to the externship. It is expected that options will include, for example: several sections of the Department of Justice; the Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor and State; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Federal Communications Commission; the Federal Trade Commission; and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Students are not required to choose a placement from this list. There will be a guided placement process that takes into account each student’s interests and goals. Each student will meet individually with the course instructor and/or placement director during this placement process.
PREREQUISITES & OTHER PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

There are no prerequisite courses for the externship. However, preference will be given to students who have taken Administrative Law, Legislation and substantive courses related to their proposed placements.

Successful completion of the core components of the externship will result in the receipt of twelve credits – four graded academic credits and eight ungraded clinical credits.

No more than 23 of the 83 law school credits required for graduation may represent either clinical courses or other courses related to legal training and at least 65 of the required 83 credits must represent regularly scheduled class sessions. The 8 credits for the field placement and any credits for the optional supervised research paper will count against the 18 credit cap. Students who have taken clinics or other externships, received academic credit for supervised research, law review, moot court or other nonresidential classroom activities (or plan to do so following the externship) should make sure that they will have the necessary credits to graduate if they take this externship. It is strongly suggested that before applying for this externship students consult Rule 1.1 of the Columbia Law School Rules for the JD Degree (http://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/rules/jd-rules/course-of-studies) and meet with Joel Kosman, Director of Academic Counseling and Student Organizations.

All government agencies perform a background check on their externs, before the externs’ work begins. Some agencies also will perform more in-depth investigations required for security clearance. Many government agencies limit eligibility for volunteer positions, including externships, to U.S. citizens. A green card will not be sufficient for those positions and even in the rare situations when a green card is sufficient, the agency and the extern likely will have to go through many time-consuming bureaucratic steps for approval of the placement. This process may not be concluded before the fall semester begins. In addition, students who have spent a significant time abroad in the recent past may confront issues with timing of the clearance process. Students who anticipate that either the clearance procedure or the citizenship requirement will pose a problem to their placements should contact Deborah Sachare before they apply to the externship program.

HOUSING
Externs will be responsible for finding and funding their own housing. Previous externs report that both housing and transportation costs in D.C. are equal to, or more than, those they experience in New York City. Upon acceptance to the Externship program, SJI will give you resources to support your housing search, though procurement is up to you.

Applicants should note that every effort is made to provide services and support to students participating in the externship; however, many on-campus services are not fully replicated for students in the externship program. Career counseling, judicial clerkship counseling, and other advice services are available only remotely. While Columbia student health insurance will cover care in the Washington, D.C. area, past participants in the program have reported substantial additional administrative work is required to obtain service. Library, printing, and other services will be available by courtesy arrangement with other schools, but service levels may not match those provided on campus.
APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE

Applications must be received via e-mail by the Social Justice Initiatives office no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2015. Applications must be e-mailed as a single PDF file to Deborah Sachare at dsachare@law.columbia.edu. Each application will be acknowledged upon receipt. If your application has not been acknowledged, you may call Deborah at 212-854-3535 to verify receipt.

APPLICATIONS

The application consists of one PDF document containing, in this order:

1. A current resume
2. A personal statement (1-2 single spaced pages in 12 pt type with 1” borders maximum) that includes discussion of:
   - the applicant’s reasons for wanting to take the Externship on the Federal Government in D.C.;
   - the applicant’s preparation for the externship, with particular attention to work experience and classes taken; and
   - interest and future aspirations, if any, with respect to government and public law work.
3. A list of 3-5 specific government agencies at which the applicant might want to work if he or she were selected for this externship. If the list includes the Department of Justice, please specify the division(s) of interest. (This list is solely for the purpose of getting a sense of where applicant might want to work. There are no “preferred” placements and the list will not be binding during the placement process.)
4. A copy of the applicant’s Columbia Law School transcript (unofficial transcript from Lawnet is acceptable).

SELECTION

Selection will be based upon the candidate’s:
- Demonstrated interest in public law and the role of lawyers in the U.S. federal government
- Preparation for the externship through classes, employment or other activities, not restricted to those done while a student at Columbia Law School
- Prior substantive employment experience, not necessarily relevant to the subject matter of the externship or to law
- Excellent legal research, analysis, and writing skills

Interviews will be conducted during the last two weeks of February, 2015.

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