Leadership Minor Field Experience/ Political Science Practicum
PA 3971/EdPA 3402/Pol 3210
Section 001
Fall 2007 (2 credits)

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Required Reading: 1) Building Worlds, Transforming Lives, Making History: A Guide to Public Achievement by Roudy Hildreth (also known as the Green Book).  
2) Leadership is Global by Walter Link, Thais Corral, and Mark Gerzon

Course Description:

The field experience/practicum is an internship-based course that encourages civic engagement and provides practical leadership situations for students to apply the theories and concepts learned in previous courses. Students will serve as Public Achievement coaches at St. Bernard’s School in St. Paul where the middle and high school students are involved in constructing projects around issues in their school/community. In the process, they are learning about leadership, public work, democracy, and public life. Coaches help with the projects and facilitate group learning.

The experience is intended to provide undergraduate students with an exciting opportunity to integrate theoretical reflection on leadership, politics, democracy, social change, and civic engagement with practice. The coach’s role will be to help younger citizens think and speak more clearly about the political world (in a language populated with concepts concerning public work, power, freedom, interests, and problem-solving) and help students cultivate the leadership skills of deliberation, negotiation, teamwork, and public speaking. Through this work, students in the field experience/practicum will learn about their own leadership styles, skills, and goals.

Course Credit: This class is offered as a 2-credit course and is A-F only. The University Senate policy outlines the quantity of work needed to earn a credit as three hours per credit per week. Therefore, you should expect to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week on this course per week.
Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Lead a group through the process of issue-development, action planning, power mapping, and moving toward group-identified goals
2. Strengthen your ability to articulate your thoughts and ideas about leadership, political theories/frameworks, and Public Achievement core concepts
3. Critically and thoroughly reflect through writing about your work with your group and your learning over the semester
4. Understand the larger scope of the social issue your group has addressed and how to provide true coaching support for your group around this issue
5. Provide critical reflection on how you have integrated the readings from the leadership minor/political science department and other courses you have taken into your leadership practice with your group.
6. Explore your personal growth in regards to the competencies, goals, or skills you identified at the beginning of the semester

The field experience will entail weekly hour-long coaching sessions at St. Bernard’s as well as weekly hour-long follow-up debriefing and problem-solving sessions with all other coaches. Thus, besides travel to and from the school, the coaching experience will be a two-hour weekly involvement in class. Overall, students should expect to set aside the period from 9:30am to 12:15pm on Thursday mornings (which includes travel to and from St. Bernard’s School).

Students will also keep (or, for returning, student-coaches, continue to keep) a thought-book that records weekly reflections on the field experience and that attempts to integrate other readings and other reflections on leadership with the field experience. As a final entry in the notebook, students will also provide a 3 or 4 page evaluation of the practicum experience. There will also be one additional required activity and one extra-credit opportunity in the form of an all-coach workshop/trainings on two Saturdays (September 15 from 10 AM to 4 PM and October 6th from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm? (details forthcoming as the event nears). Coaches (as well as students, teachers, parents, and others) from other Public Achievement courses and sites will also be involved. These activities will allow a broader view of our collective work, and the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Finally, transportation will need to be coordinated for our weekly Thursday trips to St. Bernard’s. Students generally work together to create carpools while other students use bus transportation. St. Bernard’s is located near Maryland and Rice street in St. Paul. For directions to the St. Bernard’s, go to:

http://www.saintbernards-school.org/maps_and_directions.aspx