84-331 A1: Money, Media, and the Power of Data in Decisionmaking
Professor Kim Smaczniak/ Monday 5:30-8:20PM / 6 units

This course focuses on the impact of three critical influences on policy and decisionmaking in Washington D.C.: money, in the form of political campaign dollars in particular; media, from national to local; and data that can define the policy problem and solution. The course will dive into each topic through a series of case studies of policies whose successful adoption and implementation hinged upon money, media or data. Students will come away from the course with the background and context to critically consider tough questions about the right role of these powerful influences on national policy. (Is the media "broken?" ; What is the prospect for moderating the impact of money on policy? ; Is the influence of data and facts on the wane in a hyper partisan political context?)

84-338 A2: Media and Politics: Political News Coverage in the Era of Trump, Twitter, and “Fake News”
Professor Heather Nauert/ Thursday 2-4:50 PM / 6 units

This class will cover political reporting on the 2020 campaign, how the candidates portray themselves, and how party tenets have evolved in recent years. We will also examine media buying, grassroots vs astroturf support, the role big money, unions and small donors play. Guest speakers will include prominent political reporters, pundits (who seem to play an increasingly important role influencing public opinion), and campaign veterans.

Professor Dale Crowell/ Wednesday 5:30-8:20 PM / 12 units

American politics has many elements and founding principles. Among them is the right of individuals- alone or in groups- to assemble and petition the government in pursuit of their interests and beliefs. This class will highlight the intersection between pressure groups, politics, and policy in Washington, DC. More specifically -based in the political science and other academic literature- the class will examine how organized interests engage and try to influence elected and public officials as they make decisions and take actions related to the nation’s political and policy agenda. The class will also interact with Washington-based advocacy and lobbying organizations to see how those ideas are applied in real life scenarios.

84-360 A: Internship Seminar
Professor Derek Harvey / Thursday 5:30-7:50PM / 12 units

The internship is the experiential "core" of the Washington Semester Program. Students intern three days per week, for approximately 24-25 hours, in offices from Capitol Hill to the White House and including opportunities in cabinet agencies, nonprofit institutions, museums, advocacy groups, policy think tanks, cultural institutions, and news organizations. Through the internship, students gain professional experience and make long-lasting professional and personal contacts. In addition, students meet once a week with the CMU internship faculty for a seminar to report and reflect on their internship experiences, and address pressing current issues from the perspective of their internship organization. In addition, the weekly seminar typically includes 1-2 CMU alumni from the Washington, DC, area. Their personal and professional experiences become part of the seminar conversation, and they make themselves available to students as ongoing sources of information and advice.

84-450 A1: Policy Forum
Professor Tom Karako/ Friday 4:30-6:30PM /6 units

84-450 A2: Policy Forum
Professor Sean Zeigler/ Tuesday 5:30-7:30PM / 6 units
The Policy Forum course takes a critical look at decision making in domestic politics and US foreign policy. It does so through weekly roundtable discussions with a diverse set of thought leaders. Based on intellectually significant essays that students are expected to read in advance of each class, these discussions give students an opportunity to ask probing questions about the three branches of the US government, media, embassies, advocacy groups, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations.

This course seeks to help students understand the responsibilities and activities that leaders and decision makers carry out on behalf of their organizations. Students are instructed in how to confidently and respectfully ask critical questions of those shaping policy. The term "roundtabling" is used to describe submitting an issue for critical discussion among relevant stakeholders. Knowing how to direct a roundtable is a significant element in the professional development of anyone interested in taking part in the policy arena, and this course helps students hone this important skill. In requiring students to read important essays related to each class session and then step back from discussions with leaders to write analytical essays, this course teaches students how to develop strong arguments based on solid logic and credible evidence, an essential component in making democracy work.