What: An eight-week program in Washington, D.C. Students receive a full course credit for a seminar - either “Liberal Democracy at Home and Abroad,” taught by Prof. Peter Ahrensdorf or “U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East” taught by Prof. Silvana Toska. Students also receive a second course credit for a full-time, supervised internship of the student’s choosing.

When: Summer 2020 approx. May 26 - July 16 (exact dates TBD)

Who: Thirty-five to forty-five students. Admission is competitive. Rising sophomores, juniors and seniors, may apply for the program (with preference to upperclassmen). Eligibility is NOT limited to political science majors; students who have yet to declare a major and those majoring in another discipline are encouraged to apply. Participants are required to have a minimum GPA of 2.5.

How: Complete the application form (available by October 1).

The application deadline is November 8, 2019 by 5pm.

Acceptances will be announced November 24.

Cost: Tuition for the program will be approximately $3500. All living expenses & travel are the responsibility of the student. There are a wide range of housing options including summer housing in George Washington University dorms (a high-end option at approx. $2400). Both merit-based and need-based financial aid are available to help – in some cases substantially – to defray these costs.

The Seminars: The 2020 seminar descriptions are as follows:

Liberal Democracy and Religion at Home and Abroad (Ahrensdorf)

The question of liberal democracy and religion is today a central question of American foreign policy and of international relations as a whole. That question focuses most urgently on the relation between Islam and liberalism. Yet the question of the relation between liberal democracy
and religion as such (including, most obviously, Christianity) is one which haunts liberal democracy from the very beginning. For the claim of John Locke, the theoretical founder of liberalism, that unassisted human reason is our “only star and compass” and his teaching that the human condition is a “state of nature” in which we humans are left to fend for ourselves seem to constitute a direct challenge to the teachings of the Bible. Furthermore, the explosively controversial issue of the separation of the church and state has been central to American domestic politics from the Founding up through our own day. The question of liberal democracy and religion, then, is one which encompasses domestic as well as international politics, non-Muslim as well as Muslim societies, and liberal political theory as well as liberal political societies. In this course, we will explore this question by studying key passages from the New Testament and the Quran; relevant works by John Locke and the American Founders; relevant Supreme Court cases on the separation of church and state; and Muslim debates about liberalism. But we will also examine this question by listening to guest speakers from the Washington area who will come to our class and address some aspect of this issue with us.

U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East (Toska)

This seminar will explore the United States’ interests in the Middle East. Who and what determine those interests? And how are those interests pursued? This course addresses these questions in two parts. First, we will consider the domestic American debate on foreign policy in the Middle East; America’s regional interests; and the political actors and factors that shape U.S. policy in the Middle East. We will then turn to America’s actions and relationships in the region, assessing American policy dilemmas across a wide variety of countries and events, such as the role of oil, the U.S.- Saudi relationship, the “War on Terror,” the Iraq war, the U.S.- Iran relations, U.S. and Israel, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the future of U.S. foreign policy in the region. These two parts of the course will cover U.S. foreign policy since the Second World War, but we shall explore these questions with a view to understanding the underpinnings of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, and thinking creatively about the dilemmas of present U.S. policy. Students should leave this class with a strong understanding of the challenges that the U.S. faces in the Middle East, as well as an informed viewpoint regarding how well America is meeting those challenges.

The Internship: With the assistance of the Center for Career Development, you can apply and serve as an intern in Washington area offices. Each student is responsible for arranging his or her full-time internship with a government office, political party, research institute, trade or industry association, public interest non-profit organization, or similar organization. At the end of the internship, each student will write an 8-10 page analytical paper about the internship experience and the role of the organization in the political process. Participants receive a pass-fail grade for this component of the program. This course can count as one of the 10 required courses for the Political Science requirements but does not satisfy any of the four sub-field requirements. Here is a list of recent DIW internships
For more information about the program, visit the Political Science website or email Dr. Silvana Toska (sitoska@davidson.edu).

Getting Started:

I. Finding An Internship

- Resources available from Center for Career Development (including a scheduled meeting with CCD staff for accepted students in January 2020)
- Talk with former program participants (names available on request)
- The Capital Source (this is a directory of offices and think tanks in DC, publications discontinued in 2008, but the old version is still of some use)
- Davidson Alumni in DC (resources from Alumni Office)

II. Finding Housing

- George Washington University, at http://summerhousing.gwu.edu
- Georgetown University, at http://housing.georgetown.edu/summer/index.cfm?fuse=overview&type=nongu
- Other local university housing offices (Catholic, Howard, etc.)
- Sublets through Washington Post, online roommate and apartment finder services
- Davidson Alumni in DC (resources from Alumni Office)

The 2020 Davidson in Washington Program
Tentative Schedule

November 8  Applications due.
November 24  Accepted applicants notified.
Mid-December  Financial aid and scholarship awards announced.
Christmas Break  Applicants begin searching for internships (but may start earlier). Make sure to note application deadlines per individual opportunities.
January 18  Non-refundable program deposit due ($200).
April 12  Balance of tuition due.
April and May  Submit internship details to Prof. Toska; finalize internship, travel, and housing; collect definitive syllabus.
May 7  Deadline for approval of internships.