



MCB6937 Study America, Washington, DC

Spring, 2026
Hybrid, 2 Credits

Instructors

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Zoom weekly office hour: Every Thursday, 10 AM ET: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/9899126300>

Teaching Assistant

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Course Description

Students will visit Washington, DC and see the results of federal science investments made by our national government and why those investments remain crucial for our future. Students will visit federal decision makers on the science investments needed for our future.

The agencies to be visited include the: 1) National Science Foundation (NSF), 2) National Institutes of Health (NIH), 3) National Academy of Sciences (NAS), 4) American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and 5) United States Congress. Appointments will be made with these agencies in advance of the event.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To learn about our federal funding agencies and how they interface with Congress and universities.
2. To learn the research goals and priorities of the federal funding agencies.
3. To learn the current views of Congress on science and how their staff interact with the federal funding agencies and universities.
4. To learn how federal funding agencies come together on common research goals.
5. To identify the most appropriate federal agency program for the student's own research interests.
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Course Overview and Purpose

Near the end of World War II in 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Dr. Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development for his recommendations on four points summarized as follows:

First: Make known to the world as soon as possible the contributions which have been made during our war effort to scientific knowledge?

Second: What can be done now to organize a program for continuing in the future the work which has been done in medicine and related sciences?

Third: What can the Government do now and in the future to aid research activities by public and private organizations?

Fourth: Can an effective program be proposed for continuing future of scientific research in this country may be assured on a level comparable to what has been done during the war?

Dr. Bush provided his responses to these questions in his report to President Truman on July 25, 1945. That title of that report was "Science, The Endless Frontier". It eloquently describes the rationale and justification for federal support of basic research in many disciplines and led to the creation of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1950. This report, which is freely available on NSF's website, will be the textbook for this course. Dr. Bush's report continues to instruct us 80 years after its publication on why federal support for scientific research is so important for our national strength, security, health, and wealth.

Course Prerequisites

None - graduate level course.

Textbooks, Learning Materials, and Supply Fees

Science – the Endless Frontier by Dr. Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, a report to President Truman, July 1945.

Available online for free here: <https://www.pi.infn.it/~giorgio/INFN/3M/SciencetheEndlessFrontier.pdf>

Or for purchase from amazon.com here:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007ZXIM50/ref=sw_img_1?smid=ATVPDKIKX0DER&psc=1

Support for student travel, lodging, and food will be paid by the students. Additional support will also be requested from a federal funding source upon approval of the course.

Instructor Interaction Plan

The instructors will preview each visit to an agency or association with the appropriate background to understand its purpose and history. Each agency or association will be asked in advance for their vision of the future of American science.

Required Technology & How to Obtain the Technology

To navigate the Washington DC area students will be required to have a cell phone for mass transit and maps. A laptop will be needed for note taking prior, during, and after each visit.

Technical skills

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> | 352-392-4357

Communication Guidelines

Effective communication between the instructor and the students as well as between the students themselves is essential for this course to be a valuable educational experience. During the Washington DC trip all students will have access to each instructor's cell phone number. Communication during the trip will be done by texting, phone calls, and email.

Class Demeanor/Expectations

Everyone engaged in this trip will need to be on their best demeanor and ethical behavior throughout the trip. All of us will not just be representing themselves but also the University of Florida. Any bad impression we make will reflect poorly on our University. Everyone will need to be assiduously punctual and dress should be business casual, or better, at all times. Prior to the trip, we discuss the proper etiquette in discussions with federal officials, particularly Congressional staff. The instructor will get advice from IFAS Communications on these issues prior to the discussion with students.

Technical Support

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Weekly Course Schedule

[required, but format can be adapted for each unique course]

Week	Topic	Assessment	Due Dates
Week 3 spring semester	Description of purpose and logistics planning for the trip - online		
Week 4 Spring semester	Introduction to the agencies being visited		
May 3	Travel to DC		
May 3-8	Daily visit to one of the NIH, NSF, NAS, AAAS, and Congress.		
May 9	Travel home		
Week 2 Summer A	Summary written samples submitted and lessons of trip discussed.	5 written assignments	May 18, 2026
Week 3 Summer A	1. Discussion of how individual research interests were informed by this trip. 2. Discussion on how the graduate students might improve justifying their work in grant proposals.	Written summary	May 25, 2026

Grading Policy

Course grading is consistent with [UF grading policies](#).

Course Grading Structure

[Required, methods by which students will be evaluated and their grade determined.]

Assignment Type	Point Value	Percent of Final Grade
Written summary of visit to ASM	16	16%
Written summary of visit to NSF	16	16%
Written summary of visit to NAS	16	16%
Written summary of visit to NIH/AAAS	16	16%
Written summary of visit to Congress	16	16%
Written summary of research interests	20	20%

Grading Scale

[scale is required; plus and minus grades may be used but are not required]

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	93-100	100% to 93%
A-	89-92	92% to 89%
B+	86-88	88% to 86%
B	82-85	85% to 82%
B-	79-82	81% to 79%
C+	76-78	78% to 76%
C	72-75	75% to 72%
C-	69-72	71% to 69%
D+	66-69	68% to 66%
D	62-65	65% to 62%
D-	59-62	61% to 59%
S	0-58	58% to 0%

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/topics> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact [UMatterWeCare](#) for additional and immediate support.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Privacy and Accessibility Policies

[required for online courses, list all technology used]

- Instructure (Canvas)
 - [Instructure Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Instructure Accessibility](#)
- Zoom
 - [Zoom Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Zoom Accessibility](#)