GU POLITICS FELLOW – JOSH PITCOCK
DISCUSSION GROUP OUTLINE
WORKING IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, AT ALL LEVELS
IT’S NOT JUST CAPITOL HILL

Discussion Group Synopsis
Many political science students think that the perfect job after graduation is awaiting them on Capitol Hill. That can be true, but there are many other avenues available for those willing to think about different paths. With campaigns, state government, the Administration, think tanks and non-profits, and the lobbying community, opportunities abound. This Discussion Group will explore these various levels of government and political organizations – what are their functions, how do they interact, what differentiates them, and what it is like to work for them.

Week 1 – Overview and Introduction to Working in Government and Politics
How do you translate a love for politics and government into a career? What options exist? What does a career in public service offer? Can satisfaction be found in the private sector? How does law or graduate school help? Do you have to stay in DC? Have you picked a “side”? Can you live on a public servant’s salary?

Week 2 – Capitol Hill, Everyone’s Favorite Place to Start
Working on the Hill is a rite of passage for many people starting out in Washington. We’ll explore how leadership offices run the House and Senate, how Congressional offices and committees are set-up, the different job functions in an office, and what it’s like to work for a Member or Senator. This conversation could range from how a bill moves through Congress to what a legislative correspondent does day in and out.

Week 3 – State and Local Government, Getting Things Done
Getting out of Washington offers an abundance of opportunities at the state and local government level. We’ll explore how Governor offices work and discuss what happens in state capitals and in local government. Policies can be enacted much more quickly at the state and local level than the federal level, and there is more room for experimentation. Potential case studies to discuss could be the work done in Gov. Pence’s office to expand the Healthy Indiana Plan, or what goes into writing a State of the State address.

Week 4 – The Executive Branch, from the White House to the Agencies
Working in the White House or an executive branch agency is the pinnacle of many government and political careers. We’ll explore how “career” and “political” employees work side-by-side and how decisions get made. I can offer insights from my time in the Trump-Pence White House and during the Presidential Transition,
especially for how a new Administration goes about the task of filling out the Cabinet and thousands of political appointments.

**Week 5 – Campaigns**

Anyone who wants to serve in an elected office has to run a successful campaign. We’ll explore what it’s like to be on a campaign and how campaigns can differ from a Congressional district, to a statewide governor race, to a national campaign. Inevitably, a discussion of the 2018 election will come up, but I think it would be more interesting to compare and contrast the Congressional midterms with what is also happening in governor and other state races. If of interest, I also could do a whole session on what it’s like to live and work on a presidential/vice presidential campaign.

**Week 6 – K Street and the Lobbying Community**

At all levels of government, elected officials and government employees hear from constituents and lobbyists about every possible issue or concern. Lobbying is sometimes branded negatively in the media, and people are criticized for going through the “revolving door.” But, what is it exactly that lobbyists do, and is it so bad? We’ll explore this and discuss the pros and cons of the lobbying system in Washington.

**Week 7, Option 1 – Catch-all to Cover Other Ways to Work in Policy**

Sometimes overlooked in the public policy sector, think tanks, non-profits and associations have a unique ability to influence policy and decision-makers. We’ll explore who goes to work at these places, how they are funded, and how they work with government entities.

**Week 7, Option 2 – Leave Open to Discuss a Current Topic and How it Impacts People Working in Different Levels of Government and Politics**

Data privacy, tariffs and trade, immigration reform, gun control, or other current topics could be discussed and analyzed for how a hot topic or issue impacts people working at different levels of government and politics.

**Week 8 – Conclusion**

A recap of the different ways to work in government and politics. Have any participants had their career goals change, or felt their horizons broaden? Does anyone have a definite path to now pursue? Has anyone been turned off to a career in government and politics? Does anyone want to run for office, run a campaign? How do you use your Georgetown experience to help launch your career?