



2026 Kinder Scholars D.C. Summer Program Call for Applications

Deadline: Sunday, October 5, 2025, at 11:59pm

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Sponsored by the Kinder Institute, the Kinder Scholars D.C. Program will send up to 32 rising MU juniors and seniors to the nation's capital for ten weeks during the summer to explore the intersection of the theory, history, and practice of constitutional democracy. Since its inception in 2015, the program has woven together the following three components to create a truly immersive and interdisciplinary experiential learning opportunity for Mizzou undergrads.

Summer Coursework: The Kinder Scholars program is first and foremost an academic endeavor, and, as such, all participants are required to enroll in CNST_DEM 4900: Beltway History & Politics. This is a three-credit hour summer course that uses weekly readings, assignments, and field trips to explore U.S. political history and constitutional theory from the era of the founding all the way into the present. With each session led by an MU professor or visiting faculty member, the class is structured in the style of a graduate seminar in that it meets once per week for two hours during the eight-week summer term, requires active participation in class discussion from all students, and emphasizes experiential learning during weekly field trips. Accepted students will be assigned to *either* the Wednesday or Thursday evening section of the class and issued a permission number to enroll during the spring semester. Note that this course can apply to the BAs in History and Political Science, even though students will enroll under the CNST_DEM course designator.

Internships: All participants intern Monday-Thursday (~30 hours/week) at an organization or organizations whose mission dovetails with their scholarly and professional interests. **Please note** that while faculty and staff at the Kinder Institute are there to help during the search, students are ultimately responsible for securing their own internships. Experience has also shown that the D.C. internship landscape is highly competitive and that identifying and securing a summer position requires significant work from the students. In order to put students in the best position to succeed, the following conditions apply to everyone admitted to the program:

- Students are required to hit certain rigorous internship application benchmarks beginning in November, before Thanksgiving Break, and continuing throughout the spring semester until an internship is secured. Failure to hit these benchmarks will result in dismissal from the program;
- Students are required to enroll in the program's 1-credit hour course in the spring semester. This serves as a weekly all-Scholars meeting during which required forms, information, and assignments are distributed and completed. All program participants are **required** to attend and more than one unexcused absence from these meetings may result in dismissal from the program;
- Students **must** have an internship secured (formally offered and accepted) by May 1, 2026, to be eligible to travel to D.C. to participate in the Kinder Scholars Program.

In terms of where participants might intern, D.C. abounds with options. From Capitol Hill, to museums and archives, to media outlets, non-profits, and NGOs, there is something for everyone. Past Kinder Scholars have interned at sites including the Department of Transportation, NPR, Victory Fund, the National Zoo, the

Federalist Society, the National Archives, the National Labor Relations Board, the Urban and Potomac Institutes, the Fed, NASA, the NEH, the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, the Presidential Library at Mount Vernon, the Alliance for Health Policy, and numerous congressional offices.

Field Trips: Each weekly class is paired with a Friday field trip that allows students to experience sites where constitutional history unfolded and relates to the assigned readings and discussions. Due to some university and federal holidays falling on a Friday, field trips may take place on a Saturday and are still required if that's the case. In recent summers, students have had the chance to explore Frederick Douglass' home at Cedar Hill, the Sewall-Belmont House, Monticello, Harper's Ferry, Gettysburg, the Naval Academy in Annapolis, and the CIA.

LIVING IN D.C.

The Kinder Institute will provide up to ten weeks of housing (the eight weeks that the class meets plus an additional week on either end of the summer term) for all participants at a centrally located living facility that offers easy access to all corners of the city, whether by Metro or foot. We expect to be in dorms on George Washington University's campus again this year. In addition to covering housing, the Kinder Institute provides all Kinder Scholars participants with a stipend of \$1,000 (min.) to help offset the cost of living in D.C. A limited number of tuition scholarships are also available to participants on the basis of need. A separate scholarship application will be circulated once the 2026 cohort has been selected.

FINANCES

Each student is responsible for paying the summer course's tuition (last year ranged from \$1,176 to \$1,860 depending on major/college and will likely differ this year based on university tuition changes). Students are also responsible for their own travel costs to/from D.C.

APPLYING TO THE KINDER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Eligibility Statement: Unless you are a transfer student, you must be at least in your third semester of coursework at Mizzou at the time your application is submitted to be eligible for the program. Students graduating in Spring or Summer 2026 are not eligible to apply, but seniors who are returning to Mizzou in Fall 2026 with plans to graduate in December are eligible. See the "Internships" section of the application for additional eligibility requirements related to searching for and securing a summer internship in D.C.

There are four components to the Kinder Scholars application, full details about which are included on pages 3 and 4 of these materials: (1) A cover letter and resume composed as if you were submitting them as part of an internship application; (2) A series of short essay responses; (3) A brief overview of the internship fields you plan to apply for, including a list of specific internships you've already identified; and (4) Contact information for three references. All components should be saved as a single MS Word document or PDF file and submitted to Kinder Scholars Program Director Dr. Jordan Pellerito, pelleritoj@missouri.edu, using "Your Last Name-KS Application" as a file name.

Application Timeline: Application review will begin immediately after the Sunday, October 5 deadline. Students who advance to the interview stage will be notified by Friday, October 17, with interviews scheduled to be held on Wednesday-Friday, October 22-24. Final decisions will be made in advance of a November 5 welcome reception and orientation for all students admitted into the program.

An optional info session about the Kinder Scholars D.C. Summer Program will be held on Tuesday, September 16 at 5:15pm in Jesse Hall 410 and will be approximately 30 minutes. No RSVP necessary. Additional information sessions covering specific aspects of the program may be held throughout the application window.

2026 Kinder Scholars Application Instructions

NOTE: Read application instructions carefully to ensure that you are satisfying all requirements for each of the four components. **Incomplete applications will not be considered by the review committee.**

COMPONENT 1: COVER LETTER and RESUME

Draft a cover letter and resume that you would submit if you were applying for an internship at **either** (A) a congressional office on Capitol Hill; or (B) a Smithsonian museum.

Note: We understand that Capitol Hill or the Smithsonian might not be your first choices of internship site, but each year, we encourage students to apply to a range of opportunities that may seem only adjacent to their studies at Mizzou. This component will thus enable us to assess candidates' adaptability as well as the professional skills of resume and cover letter writing. Use the links below for helpful tips:

- [Click Here](#) for general resume tips
- [Click Here](#) for a wonderful example of a clear resume in terms of both layout and content
- [Click Here](#) for helpful hints on *what* to include in a cover letter and *where*

COMPONENT 2: SHORT ESSAY QUESTIONS

Following the resume, students should respond to the three essay prompts in 300-350 words per response, starting each one on a separate page. Single-space responses and include a word count for each at the end.

- **Prompt #1:** What do you believe being successful is? By this, we mean: what does success look like, feel like, sound like, or otherwise? Has your idea of success/a successful person changed throughout your life and if so, why?
- **Prompt #2:** You've been tasked with deciding the Seven Wonders of the United States (a la the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and the New Seven Wonders of the World). What sites do you choose and why?
- **Prompt #3:** What do you wish applications and/or committees asked you about when applying for positions and opportunities? Another way of asking: what do you wish people knew about you aside from your academic and professional application materials?

COMPONENT 3: INTERNSHIPS

As the first component of the application foreshadows, the internship search begins more or less the minute you are accepted into the program, so getting a head start on that process is imperative. In 200-250 words, briefly describe what fields, **plural**, you intend to look for internships in and why. After that, provide a list of at least 20 D.C. sites in these fields that accept undergraduate interns and the contact information (website and, where applicable, email address of internship coordinator) for each site. 20 sites total, not per field, all of which must sponsor in-person internships (hybrid is acceptable). Especially after COVID, internships tend to list if they're completely remote/virtual, so you can probably assume that a position is in-person if you can't clearly find anything of the contrary. This list doesn't count toward the word count.

COMPONENT 4: REFERENCES

On a new page, please list the names and emails of three people who can attest to your academic and professional capabilities. Two of the references must be college-level professors or instructors. Other undergraduate students cannot be references. It's important that these individuals know you are listing them as references, as the Scholars committee may contact them. **Please make sure that names and email addresses for your references are included as references in the resume that you submit in Component 1** of the Kinder Scholars

application. We don't want this requirement to hinder people from applying, so if you're having difficulty identifying a faculty member to provide a reference, contact us about possible alternatives

Submit all Components in a single MS Word Doc or PDF to Dr. Jordan Pellerito, pelleritoj@missouri.edu, using "Your Last Name-KS Application" as a File Name

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