



2027 Kinder Scholars D.C. Summer Program Call for Applications

Deadline: Monday, October 12, 2026, at 11:59pm

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Sponsored by the Kinder Institute, the Kinder Scholars D.C. Program will send up to 40 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 co-enroll in CNST_DEM 4900: Beltway History & Politics, a three-credit hour, eight-week summer course that explores 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 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 and emphasizes active participation in class discussion from all students. Accepted students will be assigned to *either* the Wednesday or Thursday evening meeting of the class and issued a permission number to enroll during the spring semester. This course can apply to the BAs in History and Political Science, even though students will enroll under the CNST_DEM course designator.

Field Trips: Except for weeks in which a federal holiday falls on Friday, each class is paired with a Friday field trip that allows students to experience sites where constitutional history unfolded. 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, Philadelphia, Arlington National Cemetery, and more.

Internships: All participants intern Monday-Thursday (~30 hours/week) at an organization 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 and ensuring logistics align with the program's requirements. 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 may result in dismissal from the program;
- There is a mandatory, one-credit hour course during the spring semester that program participants are **required** to attend. The class serves as a weekly meeting for the entire cohort to receive important information, ask questions, and work on applications. More than one unexcused absence from these meetings can result in dismissal from the program;

- Students **must** have an internship secured by the program's final housing list due date, to be eligible to travel to D.C. to participate in the Kinder Scholars Program. We won't know the housing list due date until the Spring semester but, for context, last year's was due on May 4.

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, the NEH, the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, the Presidential Library at Mount Vernon, the Alliance for Health Policy, and numerous congressional offices.

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. 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 2027 cohort has been selected.

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 2027 **are not eligible** to apply, but seniors who are returning to Mizzou in Fall 2027 with plans to graduate in December **are eligible**. Students must be and stay in good academic standing, per University requirements. See the "Internships" section on page 1 of the call-for-applications for additional eligibility requirements related to searching for and securing a summer internship in D.C.

There are three components to the Kinder Scholars application, full details about which are included on page 3 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; and (3) 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 **Monday, October 12 deadline**. Students who advance to the interview stage will be notified by **Tuesday, October 27**, with interviews scheduled to be held on **Wednesday-Friday, November 4-6**. Final decisions will be made in advance of a **Thursday evening, November 12** welcome reception and orientation for all students admitted into the program.

Optional info sessions about the Kinder Scholars D.C. Summer Program will be held on **Tuesday, September 15** and **Wednesday, September 16** from 5:00-6:00pm in Jesse Hall 410. No RSVP necessary.

2027 Kinder Scholars Application Instructions

NOTE: Read application instructions carefully to ensure that you are satisfying all requirements for each of the three 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. Please use single-space and include a word count for each at the end.

- **Prompt #1:** You've been asked to edit a collection of essays about constitutional democracy for publication. As the editor, you also contribute an essay—what is your essay about and why? What nine other people are you asking to write an essay and why? For four of these people, please specify what you'd ask them to write their essay about and why. What would you title this book and why? What would the front cover look like and why?
- **Prompt #2:** As the cover letter/resume 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. For your second essay, 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, at least eight of which must sponsor in-person internships, and this list doesn't count toward the word count.
- **Prompt #3:** It cannot be stressed enough how rigorous the internship application process is. Admitted students must balance their expected late-Fall and Spring semester workload with deadlines beginning in November. A majority of students each year apply to over 75 internships, with some submitting over 120 applications.

With the understanding that your Spring schedule won't be known until later, please outline a tentative plan that demonstrates your strategy for ensuring success November through May. Your plan should consider how you will integrate the program's additional workload alongside your coursework, job(s), campus involvement, and planned or unexpected commitments (school breaks, family emergency, etc.). While not required in this prompt, it is also worth considering your mental health and support network in this plan—how do you navigate stressful situations? How will you take care of yourself in such a rigorous schedule? Who can you lean on when stressed, discouraged, or overwhelmed? This can take the form of a brief essay, as with the previous questions, or a more creative format that better

represents your organizational preferences. If helpful in constructing a plan, please use the following hypothetical guidelines:

Monday, November 16 by 11:59pm - Revised resume and cover letter due

Thursday, November 19 from 5:00-6:30pm - First meeting

Monday, November 30 by 11:59pm - Final revised resume and cover letter due

Thursday, December 3 from 5:00-6:30pm - Second meeting

Monday, January 11 by 11:59pm - 40 internships you plan on applying to entered on program-provided application tracking sheet. The internships do not have to be actively open to list in this deadline, so long as you plan on applying once they are open.

Every Wednesday beginning January 21 3:00-4:00pm – Mandatory class

Every Sunday by 11:59pm beginning January 24-February 28– 10 complete, submitted applications tracked on program-provided tracking sheet

Every Sunday by 11:59pm beginning on March 7-April 25 by 11:59pm - 5 complete, submitted applications tracked on program-provided tracking sheet. While you will stop applying when you've submitted a written offer and acceptance on Canvas, please plan to apply through all deadlines for this prompt.

COMPONENT 3: REFERENCES

Please arrange for three references to be listed at the end of your application. References should be people who have directly worked with you and can speak to your skills in an academic and/or professional setting, such as a professor, supervisor, or previous employer. Undergraduate students may not serve as references. Aside from your references' names, please provide the role in which you know/knew them and their email address.

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