COVER LETTER TEMPLATE
David Morse, Ford School Writing Instructor

your address
your address

date

name of organization
address
address

Dear Sir or Madam:

Introduction: where you are a student. Current academic interests. Why you are applying for the job. Your strongest skills.

Example:
“I am a second year graduate student at the U of M pursuing an MPP with a focus on the [ICT sector]. I am writing to express my interest in a summer 2005 internship with [the W. T. Bureau at the FCC]. With my combination of [private sector technical experience] and [policy expertise], I will contribute quickly to the WTB’s mission with effective, useful analysis.”

Second paragraph: Describe either your work experience or your coursework, whichever is most relevant to the position for which you’re applying. In your paragraph on work experience, emphasize the skills you honed or acquired and the specific tasks that you performed. Choose at least one aspect of your job and describe in some detail—e.g., what kind of problems were you attempting to solve, and how did you solve them?

Example of opening sentence of second paragraph:
“Through various jobs and internships in the business community, I have gained valuable skills useful for a career in x. For example, while working at X, I …” [As in your resume, use lots of verbs and use the personal pronoun “I”. Be specific about your duties and accomplishments. Avoid passive constructions such as, “My job with XXXX allowed me to learn more about …”]

Third paragraph: Describe either work experience or coursework, whichever you didn’t describe in paragraph two. In your paragraph on coursework, list specific courses you have taken, then describe one or two courses in particular that seem most relevant. Describe a project or paper that you worked on in one of these classes, again, stating the problem you were trying to solve, the way you went about solving it, and a summary of your conclusions. This provides an example of your analytical abilities, rather than simply asking the reader to believe that you have them.

Example of transition from work exp. to coursework:
“I have augmented these skills with relevant policy coursework at the F. S. of P. P., over the past year. For example, in the Political Environment of Policy Making, I wrote an analysis of …”

Last paragraph: summarize. Repeat that you are well qualified for the job, and the reasons you are enthusiastic about working for this organization. Conclude with something like the following:

“Please feel free to contact me by email or phone with any questions or to discuss this further. Thank you for your time and consideration. I will look forward to hearing from you soon.”

Sincerely,

Xxxxx Xxxxx