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246-BL Mass Media and Politics

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Mass Media & Politics
POLI 246-BL
Fall 2016

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Please note: POLI 246 is blocked with HIST 408 Constructing the Public.

Course Description

Mass Media & Politics is a hands-on, analytical and practical course that places you squarely in the center of contested political campaigns where you will learn to navigate the murky waters of the political arena. You will need to be professional and ready to interact with voters, candidates, volunteers, and staffers in a variety of settings. You will work directly and indirectly with the people who make critical decisions about *the public*.

In this course you will intern for elected officials and candidates seeking office in southwest Ohio. Campaign politics has one goal, winning: securing more votes than your opponent to earn the right and the responsibility to make decisions that affect your community, city, state, and nation. What is the best way to secure the necessary votes to win the race? What message resonates with voters? How does the message change?

We will take an in-depth look at how your individual campaigns are run, challenge, and critique various strategies, and develop our own campaign plans to be presented at the end of the semester. The course is expected to provide you with practical experience working in a professional setting and to encourage you to take a critical look at how public officials are elected.

Throughout your sophomore year of block, you will work with a host of civic leaders on a variety of electoral and legislative matters. In order to receive the opportunity to make policy decisions, you must first be elected. Over the years, PPP students have earned a good reputation throughout this community as being professional, intelligent, hard-working, and dedicated members of the public. You will be expected to maintain and improve upon that reputation.

Much of politics, both electoral and policy is about relationships. You have been building relationships your entire lives and developing a set of skills to help you do so. This is your opportunity to improve upon those skills and add new skills to your repertoire. Whether you are running for office or advocating for an issue, how far you get depends on the relationships you have been able to develop, cultivate, and maintain. Everyone says all politics is local; what they don't always add is that all politics is personal. If you have a personal relationship then you are more likely to secure a donation or a vote, arrange a meeting, or influence a decision. The importance of relationships cannot be stressed enough. This block is a yearlong opportunity to develop relationships with leaders across every level of society in Cincinnati. Whether you end

up staying here or going elsewhere, there is a good chance that these relationships could serve you well in your future.

Why is POLI 246 blocked with HIST 408?

There are many college courses that attempt to integrate students into the political world, to teach them how to campaign effectively and to understand how to analyze an election. Few courses and programs, however, actively engage in electoral politics while simultaneously addressing some of the most pressing issues that face cities and regions in our history. These issues may never come up in an electoral campaign, but they represent many of the challenges that we elect officials to address. HIST 408 Constructing the Public is designed to provide an historical understanding of how these issues have developed and to help you develop a critical approach to the narratives that have been crafted to address, submerge, or ignore these issues. Both POLI 246 and HIST 408 also attempt to cultivate the skills of reading, analyzing, and writing without which you cannot effectively engage the public. In short, these courses go hand-in-hand.

The Sophomore Block

Taken as a whole, these two blocked courses are designed to develop engaged and informed citizens who are both reflective and effective. Politics requires a combination of vision and power or, to put it somewhat differently, argument and technique. Without an argument about where we are and a vision of where we want to go, the most sophisticated technique, the most effective exercise of power, leads nowhere. Argument and vision without technique, without power, without a strategy and a means of implementation, are equally pointless. Vision and power, argument and technique, have to be brought together and that is what we hope these two linked courses will do. The interaction between vision and power is not seamless or smooth, nor is one or the other the exclusive terrain of either course. We may even decide that the political system as presently constituted frustrates our best intentions. Or we may decide that our visions are impractical and unworkable. But in such tensions lies a good deal of the learning. We hope the experience will contribute to your ability to merge theory and practice and to transcend the stifling disciplinary boundaries of the academy. We also hope the experience will contribute to your development as citizens, people who see the world critically, care enough about the world to engage in public affairs, and try to make a difference.

Learning Objectives for POLI 246-BL

1. Develop Professionalism: As students work throughout the semester with candidates, campaign staff, the general public and the media there is an on-going, deliberate discussion among the students, faculty and advisors of what is or should be the standard for professional behavior in the wide, diverse range of public and private circumstances in which we will participate. That includes, but is not limited to how one should dress, speak, shake hands, craft a resume, write a cover letter, draft an email, and work in a team. By the end of the semester we hope that each student will consider what it means to be a **“civic professional.”**

2. Enhance Communication Skills: Students must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively, often with short preparation time, to varied audiences through traditional communication methods, and also in white papers, press releases, letters to the editor, op-ed pieces and general circulation pieces.

3. Improve Ability to Work in Teams: Students will gain an improved sense of the dynamics and importance of working in teams. In addition to working for a campaign outside of class and being part of different campaign activities that require team work, students are arranged in teams within the class itself that work together for the entire semester. Decisions are not made by individuals, but through collaboration. Campaigns are not owned by the candidate or the campaign manager, but by the entire support structure. Individual students must work with different personalities and skill-sets and work themselves into an effective, agile team with all members capable of presenting each aspect of their campaign plan.

4. Live and Critique the Electoral Process: Students will increase their knowledge of the American, and more specifically, the Cincinnati region's political system. They will gain the common knowledge involved in running any campaign in the country and the ability to analyze critically the place they live and work in order to understand how to apply that common knowledge throughout the country. They will learn about time management, decision-making, money management, volunteer organization, targeting, and planning, by doing it.

Note: Students will gain insights into new data-driven modeling of campaigns through their collaboration with students from Xavier's Math department, under the guidance of Dr. David Gerberry.

5. Integrate the Cincinnati region's political history and narrative: Students will develop an understanding of the region, the people who play and have played roles in shaping the region, the issues that are important to people and to the region, and the various narratives that tell the stories of the region. To be truly effective, an understanding of the people you are working with and for is critical.

6. Understand Politics & the Media: Students will learn about how politics affects and is affected by the media. There are three major forces involved in this interaction: the media, the politicians, and the public. Members of the media want to sell papers, so they write stories that sell the most papers and attract the most advertising dollars. They write headlines that draw people in to make the purchase. The public expects their elected officials to carry out their duty effectively, but tend to prefer sensationalized stories and headlines that might be light on content and facts. Elected officials need the attention of the media to stay in office, but also want to carry out their duty effectively.

7. Strengthen Critical Analysis of Complex Issues: Students will learn to apply critical analysis in a variety of settings often under dramatic time constraints. They will learn to read past election results, census data, news reports, neighborhood lines, and public policy issues and understand what it means for current elections. They will develop their analytical abilities to formulate strategies and arguments intended to build constituencies.

Learning Objectives for Sophomore Block

8. Multi-disciplinary Learning: Politics is about life. Students will enhance their ability to see and create connections that exist throughout different disciplines. Philosophy, history, ecology, business, mathematics, marketing, religion, and other fields of inquiry all play a role in both electoral and legislative politics. No candidate or elected official is expected to be an expert on solar panels or tax credits, but they need enough of an understanding to make educated

statements, to be persuasive, to launch a press release, to record a commercial, and ultimately make a sound policy decision.

Course Assignments

Journals

20% of Grade

Seven journal entries are due during the course of the semester. These should not be simple recounts of what you do on a daily basis. Rather, they should highlight tasks you have completed and critically engage that task: why it is important, who you worked with, what their responsibilities are, what the point of the task is, and what it is teaching you. Please do not write:

“On Monday I worked for the campaign. I opened mail, then had lunch, I made a few phone calls, and then went home. I hope tomorrow is better.”

Journals will be graded based on “on-time completion” and your ability to assess the quality and significance of your work. Due dates and optional topics are listed on canvas.

Individual Assignments

25% of Grade

Throughout the semester you have to complete assignments that are listed in the course outline. All assignments should be submitted to Canvas on time. Assignments will be listed on canvas.

Participation

20% of Grade

Participation is critical to this course. If you do not show up to class, you are not participating. If you do not speak in class, you are not participating. You receive points for showing up to class and for participating in each class. Each campaign will submit a report on student participation in the actual campaign. Every student is expected to complete at least 25 hours of campaign work. More time with the campaign typically results in increased learning opportunities and better relationships.

Group Presentations

25% of Grade

As a member of group, you will make four presentations during the course of the semester. Due dates are listed below and on canvas. In each presentation you will be asked to do something differently. Some will require detailed information to be explained and others will require you to be succinct and brief. Sometimes presentations can be as simple as standing at your seat and reporting your information and sometimes they require you to wear a suit, prepare a PowerPoint, and rehearse. Ultimately, the goal is to be comfortable speaking in a variety of public settings on a range of topics. The breakdown of how group presentations fit into the total grade is below. Grading rubrics can be found on canvas.

Candidate Profile

August 27th

5%

Upload to canvas: One page, including a picture of your candidate listing 5 attributes you believe are most important to their election.

Turnout, Magic number, Base, and Swing **September 8th** **5%**

Upload to canvas: Powerpoint or other method for presentation detailing turnout, magic number, base, and swing.

Campaign Budget **October 1st** **5%**

Upload to canvas: Powerpoint or other method for presentation demonstrating budget and priorities it highlights.

Comprehensive Campaign Plan **October 22nd & 27th** **10%**

Upload to canvas: Comprehensive campaign presentation

Course Final

10% of Grade

The final assignment for this course will be a 5-7 page reflection submitted to canvas during this courses exam period. The prompt and further guidelines will be distributed during in the semester.

Late assignments will be penalized at the discretion of the instructor, generally five percent per 24 hours.

Please note the following policy from page 52 of the Xavier University Catalog (the History Department and your instructors take this seriously):

“The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation.”

“All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own.”

“Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an ‘F’ in the course, and expulsion from the University.”

Grading Scale: 92-100 = A, 90-91=A-, 88-89=B+, 82-87=B, 80-81=B-, 78-79=C+, 72-77=C, 70-71=C-, 68-69=D+, 62-67=D, 60-61=D-, below 60 =F.

Each of these components will be measured for the quality of the content, the effort put forth and the professional level of presentation based on the following scale:

A+ to A:	Consistently Excellent
A- to B+:	Excellent
B to B-:	Good
C+ to C:	Fair

Course Outline

An Introduction to the Block

1. T 8/23 – Introduction to Mass Media & Politics & the Block. Syllabus. Introduction to Issues of the Region. How does a campaign work? How is the strategy developed? Who pays for it? Who executes it? Who cares? Who votes and when? What wins an election? Election Night.

Assignment Due 8/30: Candidate Profile

The Candidate, The Election, & The Voters

1. Th 8/25 – **The Making of a Candidate** ~ Discussion: Structure of Local Electoral Politics. Expectations for the semester in the classroom and in the community. Finalize team assignments.

Assignment for 8/30 – Read Magic Number Handout

2. T 8/30 – **Analyzing an Election: Issues & Voters** ~ Brief Candidate Profile Presentation. How are elections decided? What are the various deciding factors? How do other races on the ballot affect your race? How does the national political scene affect the local political scene? Past local elections. What is a magic number? What is turnout? How do you determine them? What sources do you use to determine them?

Assignment for 9/6 – Read Base & Swing Handout

2. Th 9/1 – First Common Session: Data and Footnoting

Identifying your Base and Swing (Numbers & People) Who are the voters that make-up base & swing? ~ What do they care about? What issues affect them? How do you formulate a plan to reach them? How does your candidate connect with voters? Is mapping an effective way to display base and swing and the issues they care about?

3. T 9/6 – **Second Common Session: Using Maps to Display Information with Dr. Gerberry** ~ *How can you utilize a map to display information? Why is it useful for you? Can you use it for the public? How can you use maps with the media? How do you create an effective map? What do you want to measure?*

Assignment for 9/8 ~ Refine turnout, magic number, base and swing to be used in comprehensive campaign presentation.

Assignment for 9/8 ~ Submit maps to canvas for each team.

3. Th 9/8 – **Turnout, Magic Number, Base & Swing Brief Presentation** What is base and swing? Where is your candidate's base and swing located? How do you find base and swing? What can you use to display base and swing? Why is it important to know base and swing? Are there other candidates that help you understand base and swing?

Assignment for 9/6 ~ Submit to Canvas your anticipated turnout, your magic number, and your base and swing. Be prepared to present in class on 9/8.

Assignment for 9/13, Read: <http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/citizens-united-v-federal-election-commission/>.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/22/magazine/how-much-has-citizens-united-changed-the-political-game.html?_r=0

<https://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/upload/candidates/2013limitchart.pdf>

<http://city-egov.cincinnati-oh.gov/2013%20PDFs/2013%20Summary%20of%20Filing%20Requirements.pdf>

The Campaign: Money, Messaging, and Media

4. T 9/13 – **Does money win elections?** ~ How much money does it take to win an election? How do outside groups affect election results? How much money has your candidate raised? What is the campaign's fundraising goal? How do you spend that money? Can you win without money? Is money a problem in politics or is money free speech?

*Assignment for 9/15 ~ Read **Fundraising & Budget Handout**. What is the budget of the campaign you are working on?*

4. Th 9/15 – **Creating a Budget & Fundraising Plan** ~ Why should anyone contribute to political campaigns? How do you raise money? Where can you find that information? How do you ask for money? What makes a good fundraiser? How do you decide how to spend your money? What can you spend money on? How does messaging change depending on where you spend the money?

Assignment for 9/20: Complete a preliminary budget for your campaign.

5. T 9/20 – **Purchased Media & Messaging: Reaching the Masses** TV, Billboards, Lit Pieces, Social Media. What is the difference between the various forms of purchased media? Can you

target voters? Or are you blanketing areas? What is the message that is used? What are the positives and the negatives?

5. Th 9/22 – **Purchased Media & Messaging: Reaching the Masses** TV, Billboards, Lit Pieces, Social Media. What is the difference between the various forms of purchased media? Can you target voters? Or are you blanketing areas? What is the message that is used? What are the positives and the negatives?

Assignment for 10/13: Begin developing the media to be used in your final presentation. Lit piece, targeted areas of the city, commercial, message. Submitted to canvas by 10/13.

6. T 9/27 – **Field Operations: Hitting Individual Voter** Votebuilder, Door-to-Door Operations, Direct Mail. How to utilize data from Votebuilder? How to utilize the data you collect? What are the advantages of going door-to-door and mailing to individuals? What are the disadvantages?

Assignment for 10/1: Submit budget presentation to canvas.

6. Th 9/29 – **Earned Media Panel** ~ Cindi Andrews, Lisa Bernard-Kuhn, Howard Wilkinson. How do you engage the traditional media? How do you write a press release? Who do you send it to? Why should they care? What is the goal of a press release? What does the media care about?

7. T 10/4 - **Budget Presentation** How have you decided to spend your money and why? What are you sacrificing in your budget? What areas will you target with the money you are spending?

7. Th 10/6 – **Fall Break, No Class.**

8. T 10/11 – **Third Common Session: Do Political Philosophies and Civic Values Matter in Campaign Politics?** Are there philosophical assumptions and civic values lurking behind your campaign strategies and messages? What about behind the strategies and messages of your opponents? Is it best to disguise those philosophies and values (yours and your opponents') or bring them to the fore?

8. Th 10/13 – **Designing your Message and Implementing It**

9. T 10/18 – **GOTV & Election Day** ~ How do you get out the vote? Who do you target? Do you have the power to get people to the polls? Is your electorate mobile enough to get to the polls? What moves people to vote? What do you do on Election Day?

9. Th 10/20 – **GOTV & Election Day Panel** ~ Bobbi Dillon, *Chief of Staff for Mayor John Cranley*, Ryan Braun, *Mainstreet Consulting*, Vanessa White, *Former Cincinnati School Board Member, Education Policy and Community Organizing Consultant*

10. T 10/25 – **PREP**

10. Th 10/27 – **Presentation of Comprehensive Campaign Plan**

11. T 11/1 – **Presentation of Comprehensive Campaign Plan**

11. Th 11/3 – **Going on the Air** ~ Election Night Preparations. How do you prepare to present information to the public? How do you dress? How do you refer to candidates and issues? How do you boil a semester of information down to sound bites for the general public? How do you make a point? What data matters? How do you analyze real-time election results?

12. T 11/8 – **ELECTION DAY** – Class will not meet at regular time. All students are expected to work for their campaigns for the day and report to the Board of Elections in the evening to begin live coverage and analysis of the election results as they are counted.

12. Th 11/10 – Post-Election Analysis

13. T 11/15 – Post-Election Analysis

Assignment for 11/17: Read all items from Folder on canvas Cincinnati Issues.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcwJt4bcnXs>

From Campaigning to Governing

13. Th 11/17 – **Fourth Common Session: The Future of the City Panel, Post-Election** ~ How do successful candidates make the transition to being an elected official? What is your role as a citizen in the governing process? How do you decide what issues you care about? Are there issues from the campaign that become governing issues? Do campaigns address issues of governance? Exercise on Public Policy Issues.

Assignment for 11/22: Read Past Issues and Potential Issues. Research your areas of interest.

14. T 11/22 – **Open**

Assignment for 11/29: Submit three potential issues to canvas using the form on canvas.

14. Th 11/24 – **Thanksgiving**

15. T 11/29 – **Potential Issues** ~ What do we consider before selecting an issue for the spring semester? Should we select two or three? What affect does an issue have locally, statewide, or nationally? What issues were submitted to canvas? How does the issue connect to the other side of this block?

Assignment for 12/1: From your list, or someone else's select the issue you are most interested in, submit to canvas a list of three people you would like to meet with to learn more about this issue. Prepare a 2-minute speech for 12/1 class to pitch your issue to the class.

15. Th 12/1 – **Laying the Issues on the Table** ~ Each student has two minutes to present the three issues they submitted to canvas, followed by one minute for questions.

16. T 12/6 – **Fifth Common Session: Spring Issue Discussion**

16. Th 12/8 – **Organizing Your Group(s)** ~ What makes a successful group? How do you set up internal communications? What are the roles to play within the group? What qualities are needed for each role? How do you begin to create a strategic direction for your group? Do you have a goal you hope to accomplish in the spring? What steps do you need to take to reach that goal? What does the class calendar look like? When do we go to DC? What do we do in DC? What should you do over Christmas Break?

17. Th 12/15 – Final Exam Due on Canvas