

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith 5210 Grand Avenue
P. O. Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913–3649
479–788–7000

General Syllabus

POLS 4103 American Campaigns and Elections

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory: 0

Prerequisite: POLS 2753 American National Government

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Examines the major stages of political campaigns with a focus on how political campaigns use media to sell candidates and issues to the voters. Reviews and presents strategies and tactics of successful and unsuccessful political campaigns.

B. Additional Information

This course will focus on the practices that political campaigns engage in **before**, **during**, and **after** the elections. Various local, state, and national political campaigns will be used as case studies for a better comprehension of the intricacies of American political campaigns and elections. How is a political campaign set up? What are the key parts of a political campaign? What makes a political campaign successful? These are some of the questions that will be tackled in this class.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss and analyze the structural framework of political campaigns in America.
2. Identify and discuss practices and coordination that occur within a political campaign during an election cycle.
3. Conduct group projects and campaign field work.
4. Provide analysis of political races based on quantitative data from polls and surveys.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills**Critical Thinking**

Students will analyze major issues/features related to the processes of political campaigns and elections in America.

Quantitative Reasoning

Students will apply appropriate statistical models to understand the mood of the electorate. They will represent statistical information symbolically, visually, numerically and verbally and will interpret models and data in order to draw inferences on the state of given political campaigns. Students will recognize the limitations of quantitative analysis.

Communication Skills (Written and Oral)

Students will compose coherent documents appropriate to get their points/opinions across to the class and to the instructor. Students will effectively communicate orally in a public setting.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical decision-making processes that political candidates and campaigns usually face in these latter's effort to win elections, and identify ethical dilemmas that political candidates and campaigns often face. They will apply ethical frameworks to resolve a variety of ethical dilemmas in the electoral system.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural political differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own, and show understanding and application of U.S. campaign strategies in a global environment. Students will demonstrate how American campaign strategies impact or is impacted by different political cultures.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Creating a winning campaign strategy
- B. Electoral laws and campaigns
- C. The use of survey research in campaigns
- D. Fundraising in campaigns
- E. Earned media vs. paid media
- F. Opposition research in campaign
- G. Fieldwork and grassroots organization