

Xavier University – DRAFT SYLLABUS
POLI 395: Congressional Campaign Internship

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 395 is a guided-internship course designed to be taken in conjunction with a 10-14 week campaign internship. Course readings and assignments focus on providing students with a thorough understanding of the governmental and non-governmental institutions that shape campaigns, including constitutional foundations, election systems, and ballot requirements, the districting process, and the role of parties, interest groups, and political consultants. The course also examines key theories in the discipline, including those related to incumbency advantage, strategic politicians, political ambition, descriptive and substantive representation, the influences and motivations of the American voter, the role of money in the U.S. political system, the value of incumbency, and democratic theory. This course will also provide students with the opportunity to assess major theories in light of the firsthand interactions with political actors and the direct observation of political institutions and processes that they experience over the course of their internship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the geographic boundaries and demographic characteristics of the legislative district or state in which the candidate is seeking office and discuss how those features shape strategies;
- Describe trends in voter participation and turnout and analyze how various institutional changes might lead to higher or lower levels of participation;
- Describe the major institutions which shape elections, including the basic constitutional requirements for service, how the party nominating process works, how districts are determined, the campaign finance rules that govern congressional campaigns, and the role of parties, interest groups & consultants;
- Compare how the U.S. election system differs from other systems and explain how those differences affect U.S. politics;
- Describe major historical developments related to elections, explain the factors that contributed to these developments and how these developments have affected political outcomes and the power and influence of various political institutions;
- Identify the various requirements that must be met for a candidate to be placed on the ballot and the requirements that must be met for a person to vote in the primary and general election.
- Evaluate the degree to which campaigns, parties, the media and other actors respond to the interests of various groups in society and the extent that processes, practices and institutions affect the descriptive and substantive representation of women, minorities and other groups in society.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You can contact Mack Mariani at any time of the day or night by cell phone at 513-508-6849 or by e-mail at marianim@xavier.edu. Sean Comer can be contacted by cell phone at (513) 713-5928 or comers@xavier.edu. Office hours are by appointment on the day of our class meetings or via phone or Zoom meeting. Please do not contact us on Canvas mail. Use e-mail, text or phone call.

BOOKS

- Gary C. Jacobson, [The Politics of Congressional Elections](#), 9th Edition. Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.
- Reeher and Mariani (eds.), [The Insider's Guide to Political Internships: What to Do Once You're in the Door](#), Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002. Kindle version is fine.

All other readings will be available on the Canvas course management system.

COURSE POLICIES

- **Internship Hours** – The number of internship hours required will vary depending on how many credits you are earning for the course.
 - **For the three-credit hour class**, students are required to work 135 hours or more during the course of a 10 to 14-week internship. Generally, that means approximately 10-15 hours per week. We recommend no fewer than 10 hours, with 15 to 20 being ideal. If the number of hours or weeks will vary from this guideline, please discuss it with the professors.
 - **For the six-credit class**, students are required to work 270 hours or more during the course of a 10 to 14-week internship. Generally, that means approximately 20-30 hours per week. We recommend no fewer than 20 hours, with 25 to 30 being ideal. If the number of hours or weeks will vary from this guideline please discuss it with the professors.
- **Time Commitment** – Varies depending on number of credit hours. In addition to your internship hours, students should expect the following time commitments:
 - **Students in the three-credit hour class** should set aside an additional three hours per week for reading, one hour per week for online lectures, one hour per week for an online discussion with your group, and one-two hours per week for your assignments.
 - **Students in the six-credit hour class** should do the same as above, plus an additional 4-6 hours per week to work on their research paper assignment (or more, as the assignment nears completion).
- **Weekly Discussions** - You will be required to participate in a weekly online discussion focused on how the the ideas from the readings and online lectures connect with your observations in the internship.

- **Online Lectures** – You should expect one or two online lectures each week over the course of the internship (each lecture is approximately 20 minutes long). We recommend that you complete that week’s assigned readings prior to watching the online lectures and that you complete the online lectures and readings prior to participating in the online discussion or working on the weekly assignment.
- **Liability Waiver** - Xavier University requires students who are participating in off-campus internships and co-ops to fill out a liability waiver. This document must be filled out and submitted on canvas before you start your internship.
- **Academic needs** – Xavier University will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me privately during the first few weeks of the semester or contact the Learning Assistance Center at (513) 745-3280 for assistance.
- **Late Papers** – Late papers and assignments will receive a one-letter grade penalty period (an A paper becomes a B, etc...). Assignments more than one week late will receive a two-letter grade penalty (or more, depending).
- **Workplace Professionalism** - As an intern, you represent Xavier University and the Department of Political Science. To receive credit for this course, you must follow through on your responsibilities, show up for your hours, adhere to the rules of your office, and uphold standards of professionalism, honesty or good judgment. The key to this is communication. If you are not able to make a particular shift at the office, let your supervisor know as soon as possible. If there is a problem in the office that you aren’t sure how to address, discuss it with your supervisor (and feel free to contact professor Mariani to discuss it as well). If you engage in unprofessional or dishonest behavior, or if you have excessive absences from your internship, you will receive a failing grade in the course.

SAFETY

Internships take place in the real world. Use good judgment and make sure you take reasonable precautions to keep yourself safe in and around your workplace. If you have concerns about safety or a workplace issue that needs to be addressed, please contact one of the professors immediately. Please be sure to provide up to date contact information in the Contact Information assignment on canvas. Also, be sure to read the Title IX information sheet provided on canvas. If you have questions or concerns, call one of us (our cell phone numbers appear above).

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

To receive credit and a passing grade, students are expected to perform well in the internship and to behave in an honest and professional manner at all times. To ensure that this is accomplished, students must be evaluated by their internship supervisors at the mid-point and end of the internship. Evaluation forms will be provided and you are responsible for submitting the completed evaluation forms on canvas. Likewise, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the quality of the experience and to share your views on the work opportunities you received during the course of the internship.

GRADING

The final grades will be based on your overall performance in course assignments and your successful completion of all course requirements.

Grade Distribution for three-credit course:

- 10% Completion of Pre-Internship Preparation Module
- 20% Participation
- 40% Assignments
- 30% Final Exam

Grade Distribution for six-credit course:

- 5% Completion of Pre-Internship Preparation Module
- 10% Participation
- 20% Assignments
- 15% Final Exam
- 20% Annotated Bibliography and Paper Proposal
- 30% Research Paper

The following point totals are needed to secure the following grades:

94%	A	78%	C+
91%	A-	75%	C
88%	B+	71%	C-
84%	B	68%	D+
81%	B-	64%	D
<64%	F		

ASSIGNMENTS

See Canvas for Assignments and Due Dates. All assignments and papers should be submitted on canvas. Do not e-mail them to professor Mariani or professor Comer. Assignments will generally be due on Sunday nights. Please manage your time wisely, while you can hand in your assignments a few days early, assignments that are not handed in on time will be immediately assessed a one-letter grade penalty. Assignments that are more than one week late will receive a two-letter grade penalty (or more).
