

Common Course Outline

POLS 200

Campaigns and Elections

3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

POLS 200- 3 credits- Campaigns and Elections introduces students to the study of the electoral process in the United States with an examination of the history of national, state and local elections. The course explores several features and topics of political campaigns and elections in America; political socialization, voting behavior, public opinion, media, political parties, interest groups, the influence of money, and the aftermath of elections in relation to policy decisions and outcomes. Students will analyze campaign strategies and experience working on a political campaign of their choice for 40 hours during the semester. Students will investigate the question, who wins elections--and why--in American Politics? Course will be offered in the Fall semester of even numbered years to coincide with Maryland and Presidential elections.

Pre-requisites: POLS 101 or POLS 111 or permission of the Political Science Program Coordinator

Overall Course Objectives:

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

1. discuss the current political environment;
2. outline the history of American elections;
3. identify major election laws;
4. explain what the Constitution says about voting;
5. describe the role of the courts in American elections;
6. trace the history of political campaigns in the US;
7. analyze the role and influence of media in campaigns and elections;
8. explain how citizens develop their political ideology and its influence on American Politics;
9. determine how political parties influence the election process;
10. compare and contrast how Democrats and Republicans run political campaigns;
11. investigate the role and influence that interest groups and political action committees have in the political process;
12. assess how polling and public opinion influence campaign decisions;
13. identify the structure and central figures of a political campaign;
14. analyze the role of money and its influence on political campaigns; and
15. debate the elements of a successful or unsuccessful political campaign.

MAJOR TOPICS:

- I. The Foundations of Elections
 - a. History of American elections
 - b. Role and functions of campaigns
 - c. Role of the courts in American elections
 - d. The Constitution and election laws
 - e. Maryland election laws

- II. Outside Players in Campaigns
 - a. Political culture and socialization
 - b. Public opinion and role of citizens
 - c. Media and politics
 - d. Interest groups & political actions committees
 - e. Political parties

- III. Campaign Organization and Structure
 - a. How a campaign is built for victory
 - b. Key individuals
 - c. The influence of money in the campaign and election process
 - d. Ethics and winning

Course Requirements

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

- Class participation in at least 5 collaborations, debates, oral presentations and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics using appropriate academic sources when doing research
- A minimum of 2 examinations and 2 quizzes
- Service learning for 40 hours on a campaign of the students' choice.
- A campaign journal/notebook

Other Course Information:

This course is a Political Science elective.

Will be offered in the Fall semester of even numbered years to coincide with Maryland and Presidential elections.

