



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: How to Get on the Ballot in Your State

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Weeks 1-2 of this semester will help you determine how to get on the ballot in your state. It will discuss the following topics: filing the appropriate papers to get on the ballot for the particular office you're seeking, the correct number of petition signatures, what counts as a valid signature in New York State, who can sign for you on petition ballots, the minimum requirements to get on the ballot in New York State, running on your party line without a nomination and running on a different party line. You will also know what the qualifications are for GOTV staff in terms of who can do paid work such as petitioning and who can work as an intern for the campaign.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

**By the end of this course, the student will be able to:**

- Identify the papers necessary to run for public office for the position they are seeking
- Know how many signatures they need from residents in their district/state to get on the ballot
- Identify a valid signature on a petition versus an invalid signature and why it is valid
- Know the qualifications for people to sign for you on a petition (eg, in New York State, the Democratic Party only allows you to sign if you're a registered Democrat who resides in the district the candidate is running in)
- The Rules for Petitioning in New York State and Objection/Challenge Process to petitioning
- What the process is to run on your party line with/without a nomination
- What the process is if you want to run on a different party line/multiple party lines.



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: Leveraging Relationships with Your Constituents

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Weeks 3-5 of Semester 2 will discuss how to leverage your relationships with constituents in the community. In the first week, you will learn the different types of constituents and that not all constituents communicate with legislators in the same way. This seminar will teach you how to engage with constituents – offering to speak directly with constituents, as opposed to a friend or family member, for example. Understanding the issue from the constituent’s point of view is important as well – they may call your office in an angry or aggressive manner because something is affecting them – don’t respond with anger. Paraphrase what they are saying to show that you understand their concerns and then outline the steps you will take to solve the issues. Express to constituents that formal boundaries are necessary for you to fulfill your duties as legislator to the best of your abilities.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**By the end of this course, the student will be able to:**

- Identify the methods of communication you will be using with constituents (phone, email, fax, online forms)
- Identify and utilize three strategies to build positive relationships with constituents in the community
- Identify at least three types of constituents (happy, persistent, angry) in the community and use their personalities to develop relationships with them
- Understand how issues happening in the community may affect constituent’s temperament and don’t allow it to influence your temperament as a legislator
- Know what strategies to use to hear the concerns of constituents – events in the community, town halls, meet-and-greets and other events – and know which strategies work best with which types of constituents



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: *Serving Your Constituents Adequately*

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Weeks 6-8 of Semester 2 will discuss how what strategies you need to have in place to serve your constituents effectively. In week 4, you will learn the strategies to be good at constituent casework. For most offices, you will have to hire a community liaison to oversee individual cases in the community. That person will handle incoming inquiries and problems of members in the community, track them, and respond to them appropriately. The person in that role should be good at relationship building, tracking problems, and addressing solutions for that problem. This course will also discuss how to properly set up a district office, setting up brochures for the incoming legislator, how to list and make available to constituents local public services in the community, the establishment of guides to solving common problems in the community, and most importantly, designing an effective way for constituents to keep in touch with their legislators on a regular basis.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**By the end of this course, the student will be able to:**

- Identify the type of candidate you need to be community liaison, schedule, office assistant, and other roles in the district office
- Identify how to properly find and set up a **district office** in the community and assign roles as necessary depending on the level of office.
- Develop a **brochure** for the incoming legislator that includes information about themselves, their title, role and how they will serve the community
- Create a list of **public services** in the community that can be made available to all constituents in print and online
- Create a **guide that establishes** methods for how to solve common problems in the community, such as who to contact about issues regarding your home, rent payment, mortgage, etc.
- Determine 1-2 **primary methods** for how you would like your constituents to keep in touch with you and how to properly track constituent inquiries on a regular basis



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: How to Effectively Advocate for Your Community

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Weeks 9-11 of Semester 2 will discuss how what strategies you need to have in place to serve your constituents effectively. In week 4, you will learn the strategies of lawmaking – that is drafting concrete legislation to better serve the needs of your constituents. You will learn about the processes involved in drafting legislation and the different stakeholders that shape these processes. For example, at the Congressional level, the tobacco industry spends billions of dollars to lobby members of Congress not to increase the cost of cigarettes. By the same token, local community groups like DARE and others, schedule meetings with members of Congress to discuss their concerns about how lowered cigarette prices and advertisements placed in certain areas will have harmful effects on teenagers in the community. The job of the legislator is to listen to all sides of the argument, and to develop legislation that reaches a compromise for both sides.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**By the end of this course, the student will be able to:**

- Identify the **Lawmaking** function of legislators as well as **logrolling** and how they interplay with one another in legislative bodies
- Identify the three types of representative agents in government – **trustee representation, sociological representation, and agency representation**. Once you define these terms, use them to determine which category you would like to fall under as a legislator for your community, and which type of representation may benefit you the most
- Identify three core issues in your community, identify the **stakeholders** involved in the process, and identify the common compromise that may satisfy all parties
- Learn the process of **logrolling**, which is to sponsor bills that have been passed by other legislators to gain traction in the community
- Select one core issues that is of crucial importance in the community, draft a 2-3-page piece of legislation that demonstrates bipartisan compromise and an effort to satisfy all stakeholders in the process



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: Fundamentals of Political Decision-Making

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Weeks 12-13 of Semester 2 will discuss policy making and decision making and how the two interact with one another in a legislative context. **Policies** are plans, courses of actions and procedures that are intended to influence policy decisions. A **decision** is typically made in one situation and can be linked to decisions made in other situations. A policy can typically be applied more generally though. What can happen is that a **decision** is made in one situation that sets a precedent that may become a “**de facto policy.**” In weeks 6-9 you will learn the importance of decision making when it comes to generating policy. You will also learn the different stakeholders that can influence decision making –**business, lobbyists, focus groups, and of course constituents** – and how to leverage each of these to help you make the best decisions regarding public policy. It requires keeping an open mind to the voices in your community and using judgment, common sense, and the needs of your constituents to help you make effective decisions.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify the core differences between **policies** and **decision making** and how they intersect. Give at least three examples of how a legislator or group of legislators’ decision-making process lead to de facto policies in history and determine whether the outcome was positive or negative for society.
- Identify how each group of stakeholders – **business, lobbyists, focus groups and constituents** – can have impact a legislator’s decision-making regarding policy.
- Identify 2-3 ways for how to **leverage** relationships with the important stakeholders in the community, giving them the opportunity to have their voices heard during the policy-making process and make sure all groups are represented in the final piece of legislation.



Curriculum Guide:

Course Title: What Happens if You Don't Win?

Date: March 2018 [*Revised January 2019*]

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Weeks 14-15 of Semester 2 will discuss the White Elephant in the Room: What happens if you don't win your race? It is not necessarily a negative thing to lose a race. You learn a lot about campaigns, what you did wrong, and how to improve for the future. We will have special guest speakers Vanessa Aronson, Katherine Brezler and Jennifer Maertz discuss their campaigns, what it was like to lose, and how they've continued serving in public life even after they've run for office. You can still be engaged in the political process by: a) working on campaigns in the community; b) hosting fundraisers and other events for women candidates; c) participating in GOTV efforts, and of course, d) VOTING! We will also teach you strategies for how to channel your energy in a positive way and frame the narrative about your campaign positively should you have to deal with defeat.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

**By the end of this course, the student will be able to:**

- **Identify** three areas where you could have improved campaign practices – door knocking, canvassing, participating in events, and polling – there's always room for improvement, and if you take note of these issues now, they won't be a big deal the next time you decide to run.
- **Listen** to the stories of women who have run – and lost – campaigns. **Reflect and learn** stories are valuable because they provide deep insight into what those candidates did wrong – individual narratives often frame the dialogue different, and help participants feel more comfortable engaging in the political process once they've heard from other women.
- **Identify** 2-3 strategies for how you can participate in the political process once you've lost (there are way more). But find your niche – perhaps you like hosting community fundraisers? Love knocking on doors? Have a passion for communicating? Whatever your interest is – find it – and use it to help other candidates in the community. It will build up your political tenure and perhaps make you reconsider another run in the future. It's also very important to stay involved in politics, no matter the outcome of an individual race.