**Winning Issue Campaigns**

**Course Syllabus**

**Instructors:**

**Time:**

**Office Hours:**

**Description:** “Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.” These words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were never more true than in today’s gridlocked American political system. Smart public policy doesn’t pass and implement itself - it comes as a result of well planned, hard fought, strategic issue campaigns, many of which span years and even decades. This course will teach students the theory and practice of strategic issue campaigns, from setting campaign objectives and targeting decision makers to planning effective tactics, designing a message frame, and winning the support of those who can further the cause.

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

* Articulate what makes an issue campaign effective
* Design an issue campaign plan from scratch, complete with strategy, goals and timeline
* Organize earned media events aimed at moving legislators to support an issue
* Pitch an issue campaign strategy to potential allies in order to garner additional support

**Grades/Assignments:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Deadline** | **% of Grade** |
| Class Participation | - | 30% |
| Group Video Project: Mock Earned Media Event (with accompanying report) |  | 20% |
| Issue Campaign Plan |  | 30% |
| Mock Presentation Seeking Support for Issue Campaign Plan |  | 20% |

**Required Readings:**

*Note: only excerpts will be required, and photocopies of these excerpts will be provided each week. All multimedia resources are hyperlinked here.*

Ganz, Marshall. “Why Stories Matter.” *Sojourners.* n.p. Mar. 2009. Web. 27 Sept. 2014. <http://www.sojo.net/magazine/2009/03/why-stories-matter/>

Ganz, Marshall. “Telling Your Public Story.” *Whole Communities.* n.p., n.d. Web. 27 Sept. 2014. <http://www.wholecommunities.org/learning/story.shtml/>

New Organizing Institute. “Leading a Data Driven Action Program.” Online multimedia training. *New Organizing Institute.* New Organizing Institute. 15 Aug. 2012. 27 Sept. 2014. <<http://neworganizing.com/toolbox/training/data-driven-program/>>

OFA Organizing Manual, Organizing for Action, 2013

*Note: this is an unpublished manual; will be distributed electronically to class registrants*

Organizing for Action. “Six Steps to Building an Issue Campaign Strategy.” n.p., 30 Sept. 2014  
*Note: unpublished article; will be distributed in class.*

Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists, Kim Bobo & Jackie Kendall & Steve Max, The Forum Press, 2010

Politics the Wellstone Way: How to Elect Progressive Candidates and Win on Issues, Wellstone Action, University of Minnesota Press, 2005

TheDreamisNowOrg. “The Dream is Now.” Online documentary video. *YouTube.* YouTube. 14 Apr. 2013. Web. 27 Sept. 2014. <[http://https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfiInvpjPtI/](http://https//www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfiInvpjPtI/)>

**Week 1:**

**Introduction to Strategic Issue Campaigns**

Required Reading:

* OFA Organizing Manual: Parts 2.1 and 2.2
* Organizing for Social Change: Parts 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
* Politics the Wellstone Way: Part 9: Advocacy, Lobbying, and Winning on Issues

**Week 2:**

**Power Mapping & Targeting Decision Makers**

Required Reading: OFA Organizing Manual: Part 2.3

**Week 3:**

**Message Frameworks & The Personal Story**

Required Reading:

* OFA Organizing Manual: Parts 2.6 and 4.1
* Ganz, Marshall. “Why Stories Matter.” *Sojourners.*
* Ganz, Marshall. “Telling Your Public Story.” *Whole Communities.*
* TheDreamisNowOrg. “The Dream is Now.” *YouTube.*

**Week 4:**

**Digital Advocacy 101**

Required Reading:

* OFA Organizing Manual: Parts 2.4 and 2.5, Appendix: How to Organize an Earned Media Event, Appendix: Letters to the Editor
* Organizing for Social Change: Parts 1.5 and 14
* Politics the Wellstone Way: Chapter 4: Communications

**Week 5:**

**Grassroots Tactics**

Required Reading: OFA Organizing Manual: Appendix: Petition and Pledge Card Drives, Appendix: Pledge-to-Call Drives

**Week 6:**

**Volunteer Structures & Recruitment**

Required Reading:

* OFA Organizing Manual: Parts 3 and 4.2
* Politics the Wellstone Way: Chapter 3, section on “Recruiting, Engaging and Mobilizing Volunteers”

**Assignment Due: Group Video Project: Mock Press Conference About an Issue**

**Week 7:**

**Writing a Campaign Plan**

Required Reading:

* Politics the Wellstone Way: Chapter 1
* Additional readings (Sample Issue Campaign Plans) will be assigned on May 13

**Week 8:**

**Creating an Organization**

Required Reading:

**Week 9:**

**Fundraising, Proposals & Pitches**

Required Reading: None

**Week 10:**

**Managing Partner Relationships**

Required Reading: None

**Final Issue Campaign Plans Due: [Insert date]**

**Final Mock Presentations: Finals Week, [Insert date]**