POL 312 : Advocacy for Policy Change

A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week :

MnTC Goals: Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies, Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci, Goal 09 - Ethical/Civic Resp

Democratic governments are assumed to be more legitimate than and preferable to other forms of government due to their openness and responsiveness to citizen influence. Yet many citizens and residents in the United States express feelings of powerlessness when it comes to influencing legislators and engaging in politics. In this course, students will learn about the state legislative process in Minnesota and develop a wide range of democratic skills necessary for becoming citizen advocates and influencing elected officials. Over the course of the semester, students will identify an issue area they want to work in; choose legislation related to that issue area to advocate for; identify and build relationships with community organizations working in the issue area; work in coalition with at least one community organization; develop a range of political communication materials for influencing legislators; and meet with state legislators to advocate for their preferred policies. The skills students will develop in this class will be applicable to participating in democracy at the local, state, and national level.

B. Course Effective Dates: 08/20/2016 - Present

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. Understand the structure and functions of the Minnesota State Legislature.
2. Know how to access Minnesota State Legislature resources to identify relevant bills, track progress on those bills, and identify key decision-makers and committees related to those bills.
3. Know how to identify community partners for coalitional work and build relationships for effective advocacy.
4. Be able to demonstrate proficiency in developing political communications materials, including policy briefs, informational handouts, persuasive videos, and letters to the editor.
5. Be able to demonstrate proficiency in speaking publicly on behalf of a bill when meeting with state legislators and others.

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies

None

Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci

1. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
3. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
4. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.

Goal 09 - Ethical/Civic Resp

1. Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.
2. Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.
3. Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.
4. Recognize the diversity of political motivations and interests of others.
5. Identify ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
G. Special Information

Note: First day attendance required except by instructor permission.