This course teaches students how to run a modern political campaign. The goal of the class is to create a stimulating and interactive environment by actually running a campaign in the classroom. A current state or federal race will be selected and students will choose class members to be the “candidates.” Competing campaigns are then built around these students. Class members will experience all they would if working on an actual campaign. They are involved with designing logos, direct mail and television ads.

Professor Kent Syler has been involved in Tennessee politics for over 40 years. Starting as a campaign “sound truck” driver in 1978, Kent has gone on to become one of Tennessee’s most respected political strategists. He managed Congressman Bart Gordon’s first campaign in 1984 and his tough re-election campaigns in 1994 and 1996. He served as Gordon’s Tennessee Chief of Staff from 1985 until his retirement in 2011. Kent has been actively involved with dozens of other campaigns ranging from city council to governor and U.S. Senate.