**POLI 409**

**Special Topics in Political Science, Maryland Student Legislature (MSL)**

**University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

Spring 2011

*Syllabus*

Professor Sponsor: Laura Hussey, Ph.D. e-mail: lhussey@umbc.edu

MSL Chapter officers and student contacts:

Delegation Chairperson: Meghan Carpenter: cmeg1@umbc.edu

Vice Delegation Chairperson: Shin Yee Yu: shinyee1@umbc.edu

Delegation Treasurer: Kian Larijani: kian1@umbc.edu

Delegation Secretary: Tori Leung: vleung1@umbc.edu

Direct questions about enrollment and academic advising to Dr. Hussey. For all other matters, first contact MSL chapter officers.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

The aim of this “class” is to familiarize students with legislative policymaking and the workings of the Maryland General Assembly, via active participation in UMBC’s delegation to the Maryland Student Legislature (MSL). MSL participants will take part in a mock Maryland General Assembly, composed of delegations from colleges and universities across the state. Weekly meetings coupled with statewide events will teach students parliamentary procedure, the legislative process, legislation writing, debate, and public speaking. To learn more about the Maryland Student Legislature, please visit msl.org.

This is a ONE CREDIT experiential learning pilot course that may be taken in multiple semesters (maximum is four times).

**Course Requirements:**

To earn the one POLI 409 credit, MSL members must:

1) Write and submit at least one piece of original legislation for consideration at the MSL Annual Session. You will need to submit a draft copy of the legislation that club officers and members will help you refine, due **2/18**,as well as a final, official copy due **3/18**. *Late draft legislation may be accepted only at Dr. Hussey’s discretion, while late final legislation cannot be accepted*. (Additional submissions of legislation are welcome and can be emailed directly to the Attorney General of the Maryland Student Legislature (ag@msl.org) by **3/18**.)

2) Submit a set of written “talking points” that will guide your oral argument for your legislation. These are informal and should be turned in with your draft legislation (**2/18).**

3) Participate in the MSL Spring Leadership Training Institute, to be held Saturday, March 5- Sunday, March 6 at Frostburg University. Effective participation means that, at minimum, you attend the entire session.

4) Participate in the MSL Annual Session, to be held Friday, April 15-Sunday, April 17 at the State House in Annapolis. Effective participation in the Annual Session means that, at minimum, you attend the ENTIRE session, including closing procedures, and formally sponsor and argue for the legislation you have submitted. Students unable to participate in the Annual Session may write a research paper instead. For details on the paper, please contact Dr. Hussey.

5) Prepare for, reliably attend and participate in weekly MSL meetings, held every Friday at noon in ITE 233**.** Students who miss more than 3 meetings will not be eligible for credit. Two late attendances equal one absence. Prior to each meeting, you will need to read legislation scheduled for debate. In addition to leading the affirmative when your own legislation is up for debate, you will need to commit to taking the negative for at least one bill.

**Required Readings**

Schaller, Thomas F. 2008. “Pioneer and Outlier: Maryland Constitutionalism in Its Third

Century.” In *The Constitutionalism of the American States*. Eds. George E. Connor and Christopher W. Hammons. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 97-112.

Handouts on the Maryland General Assembly

MSL handouts and proposed legislation distributed by MSL officers

**Maryland Student Legislature Schedule of Meeting Topics and Important Events**

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| **1/28** | First meeting, discussion of course requirements, distribution of important handouts, meet and greet. |
| **2/4** | *Registration Deadline for Spring Leadership Training Institute*  Bill writing workshop, Mock Debate |
| **2/11** | Mock Debate |
| **2/18** | **Rough Draft of Bill due** Mock Debate |
| **2/25** | Mock Debate |
| **3/4** | Prepare for LTI/IA |
| **3/5** | **Spring Leadership Training Institute at Frostburg University** |
| **3/6** | **Spring Leadership Training Institute at Frostburg University** |
| **3/11** | Prepare for General Assembly |
| **3/18** | **FINAL BILL DUE (email to Dr. Hussey and Meghan)** *Registration Deadline for Annual Session* |
| **3/25** | *Spring Break- No Meeting* |
| **4/1** | Prepare for General Assembly |
| **4/8** | Prepare for General Assembly |
| **4/15** | **Annual Session at the State House in Annapolis** |
| **4/16** | **Annual Session at the State House in Annapolis** |
| **4/17** | **Annual Session at the State House in Annapolis** |
| **4/22** | Event Recap and Elections |