



## Curriculum Outline

PurpleState uses a virtual internship simulation format to engage students in state level policy issues, understanding the role of media in politics, developing skills in argumentation, and self-efficacy for engaging in civic action. This outline describes key tasks interns participate in throughout the roughly 10 hour simulation.

The simulation utilizes an “engagement first” design where students are engaged in problem solving that requires them to seek out and access content from the various resources in the simulation. In this way they learn through engaging in the problem instead of learning before engaging in applying that information. This model is designed as a collaborative activity with the teacher playing the role of the account manager in our fictitious political communications firm. Their role is to support interns, push interns to consider their work more deeply, and to sell the fiction of the simulation and internship.

### **Phase One: Intern Onboarding**

#### **Task 0: Introduction to the Simulation – 45 Minutes**

Interns are introduced to their internship and the work that PurpleState does. They also complete their internship entry interview (pre-survey).

#### **Task 1: Identifying Target Audiences – 45 Minutes**

Interns are introduced to the campaign design process through helping a PurpleState consultant to identify potential target audiences for the campaign they are designing using polling data.

#### **Task 2: Locating Target Audiences – 45 Minutes**

Interns assist the PurpleState consultant to use the PS Map Tool to locate where these target audiences reside throughout the state.

#### **Task 3: Choosing a Campaign Strategy and Message – 75 Minutes**

Interns continue to assist with the campaign design by conducting a media audit to identify potential campaign strategies and messages. They will learn how to use the news layer of the PS Map tool.

#### **Task 4: Making Media Buys – 60 Minutes**

Interns use the campaign simulator to test out the different campaign strategies for the campaign they are helping with and will recommend strategies and target media markets based on their projected results.

#### **Task 5: Debriefing the Final Proposal – 30 Minutes**

Students will review the final Campaign Proposal that they assisted with and reflect on the role of media in politics and how what they have learned relates to their own political and news media experiences.

## **Phase Two: Designing a Campaign**

### **Task 1: Introduction and Next Steps – 40 Minutes**

Students will move from training to working in collaborative teams to conduct research and develop a statewide media campaign for an assigned special interest group on the issue of gun control.

### **Task 2: Campaign Introduction and Research – 60 Minutes**

Interns will understand the empirical evidence on the issue, the different perspectives on the issue and why it is viewed as controversial using a report from the PS Research Department.

### **Task 3: Campaign Research, Design, and Strategy – 70 Minutes**

The intern teams will conduct their initial research to start developing their campaign strategy, including using polling data to identify target audience groups, use the PS Map Tool to identify media markets to target these audiences, and to identify campaign strategies and messaging through conducting a media audit.

### **Task 4: Campaign Testing and Final Proposal – 55 Minutes**

Teams will deliberate their campaign strategy options and collaborate to test their strategies through using the PS Campaign Simulator to project the effects of their ad buys before making final decisions. They will then collaborate to develop their proposal for their special interest group clients using evidence from their research and media strategy projections to support their proposed strategy.

### **Task 5: Reflective Discussion – 55 Minutes**

Account Managers (teachers) will lead intern groups in a debrief discussion about the knowledge and skills they have developed throughout the simulation. They will also engage interns in considering the political media system that they have experienced in the simulation and considering potential alternative systems for engage in advocacy and learning about policy issues. Interns then complete their exit interview (post-survey).

### **Optional Simulation Extension**

Account Managers may want to extend the simulation. Three potential options are to have intern teams: 1) develop a presentation “pitch” for their clients and present them, 2) work together to develop a sample advertisement for their campaign (e.g., infographic, television or radio ad), or 3) consider the internship as a training for asking students to identify an issue they care about locally and develop a strategy for raising awareness using what they have learned.