

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management
Fall 2021
September 30 – December 9

Fundamentals of Political Management PMGT 6401-10

3 Credits
CRN 62758

Monroe Hall 111, Thursdays 6:10 – 8:00 pm plus asynchronous online “third hour.”

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructors

Associate Professor Dr. Michael Cornfield

Email: corn@gwu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment.

Biography:

Michael Cornfield, a political scientist, is an Associate Professor of Political Management at The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, and Research Director for the Global Center for Political Management.

Cornfield directs the PEORIA (Public Echoes Of Rhetoric in America) Project, a research initiative developing qualitative and quantitative methods to extract political intelligence from social media data. Project reports and bulletins may be found at <https://gspm.gwu.edu/public-echoes-rhetoric-america-peoria-project>.

Cornfield received his B.A. from Pomona College and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Before coming to The George Washington University, he taught at the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary. Cornfield also served as a Senior Research Consultant to the Pew Internet & American Life Project. He lives with his wife Kathryn Mimberg and son Matthew in Arlington, Virginia.

Follow him on Twitter [@MBCornfield](https://twitter.com/MBCornfield)

Corina L J DuBois, Instructional Assistant

Email: corina@CLJDubois.com

Office Hours: By appointment.

Biography:

Instructional Assistant Corina DuBois is a 2011 GSPM graduate and brings over 25 years of federal experience to our program. She is a U.S. Navy veteran and has worked in traditional and digital communications for the Atlantic Council GeoTech Center, the United States Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and currently serves at the Department of Commerce, United States Patent and Trademark Office as a Senior Strategic Communications executive.

Contacting Us

Email is the best way to reach us. We will usually respond within 24 hours. If we can't resolve a problem through email we will arrange a video meeting.

WHEN YOU HAVE A PROCEDURAL QUESTION, CHECK THIS SYLLABUS FIRST, THEN ASK ABOUT IT.

Blackboard

Grading, announcements, and assignments will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss.

Attendance Policy

See the “Regarding Deadlines” section in the course description ahead.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW’s online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting:

Dr. Todd Belt
Director, Political Management Program
tbelt@gwu.edu 202-994-4363

THE PROGRAM

Political Management Program Objectives

A Political Management degree prepares students to win campaigns for elective office and policy positions, and to do so in a manner that benefits democracy and society as well as their organization and clients.

In completing the degree, students will be able to:

1. Assess a political environment, develop a strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy;
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills;
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize the strategy;

4. Find, engage, and motivate the right leaders, professionals, and citizens;
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards and professional conduct.

Graduate School Expectations

Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their academic responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Utilize effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments on the required due dates and times.
2. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.
3. Understand how to properly format in-text citations and references for resources and information integrated into their written assignments.

GSPM prepares students for careers in the professional political world. In politics, words and deadlines matter. Excellent written communication skills are essential for success. Every word used, whether it is in a television or radio ad, direct mail piece, social media, or a press release, will be scrutinized. Similarly, deadlines are important. Election Day does not get postponed because a candidate and their campaign are not prepared. There are no “do-overs” because a direct mail piece did not arrive to its intended recipients until after the election was concluded. Students will be best positioned for success in the practical political world if they have developed and exercised excellent written communication and time management skills.

THE COURSE

“Politics and love are the only forms of constraint possible between free people. Politics is conflict become discussion, and it sets us a humane task on a human scale.”

----Bernard Crick, *In Defense of Politics*.

Many people stay away from politics. It's usually frustrating and occasionally brutal. But some politics shunners pay more attention to it than they like to admit.

As well they should. Politics affects everyone.

A few people want to do their best to make politics, and democratic politics in particular, work. That self-selected population includes you and your classmates. So welcome!

This course, and this program, will show you how to learn more about how political campaigns are organized, how campaigns connect (and fail to connect) with citizens and governments, and how you can plan your next best steps in the political world.

More formally, Fundamentals of Political Management introduces GSPM students to the field of political management: essential concepts, skills, methods, roles, and standards of conduct that political managers rely upon to advise decision-makers and carry out their own decisions.

We will consider four “fundamentals.” A course learning objective is rooted in each one.

The Fundamentals and Course Learning Objectives

Strategy: Strategic communication—communicating with a purpose in a social or organized setting--constitutes the core of applied politics. You will learn basic types of strategies inherent to election, advocacy, and governance campaigns. You will also learn how to recognize from readily available evidence what kind of strategy a campaign is deploying and how well it is executing it. You will learn how to devise and implement communication strategies in many of your ensuing courses, culminating in PMGT 6495, Capstone: Political Power and Practice.

Research: Political professionals collect, organize, analyze and evaluate relevant empirical evidence to shape, inform, and optimize their campaign strategy. You will learn to conduct and

interpret several types of mostly qualitative research on behalf of a mock client in keeping with a designated strategy. You will be introduced to elements of quantitative research, the main subject of PMGT 6403, Political Data and Analytics.

Message & Narrative: Political professionals specify who should say what to whom, when, where, and with respect to which competitors. They embed action-oriented **messages** into public **narratives** familiar to and believed by members of the community in which a campaign occurs. Professionals also master listening to and conversing with others; communication is not just a unidirectional matter of crafting and delivering messages, as important as that is. You will learn to critique and compose messages for your mock client, and explain to the client in cover memos what the messages are meant to accomplish. You will learn to refine messages and combine them into a plan in PMGT 6403, Applied Political Communications.

Engagement: For campaigns to succeed political managers must persuade and mobilize citizens to vote, contribute money and volunteer hours, and assemble and petition to demonstrate the strength of a policy position. At the same time, political players must meet and negotiate with counterparts in order to form alliances capable of delivering the results they seek. Engagement thus entails attracting attention, obtaining commitments, maintaining interest, and motivating both populations and peers to act in effective concert at decision moments. You will participate in and monitor group activities and cross-group simulations, and then reflect on your engagement experiences in debrief memos. In the process, you will be introduced to dilemmas and Principles of Political Leadership, the main subject of PMGT 6404.

Course Requirements

Your course grade will be based on nine deliverables. Each will be discussed within your working group/campaign team and then written individually.

Guidelines on memo-writing and presentations may be found in the Electronic Reserves section of the Blackboard course pages.

Borderline grades will be decided on the basis of class attendance and participation.

For due dates see the course Schedule ahead. In general, assignments will be due at the start of the Thursday class session immediately following the posting of the assignments on Friday.

Please use Blackboard to access and deposit the assignments. They should be composed in Microsoft Word. Assignments submitted otherwise (e.g. email cut-and-paste, in pdf format) will not be annotated with feedback.

Here is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*		Grading Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.

B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a "B" is viewed as unacceptable.
B-	80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest gradetopass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

Assignment grades will be based on the intrinsic quality of your work (the content), and also on how well you write. Like your employers and clients, the GSPM places a high value on excellence in written composition. Your deliverables will be marked up with an eye toward meeting a minimum standard of correct and legible English, and you will receive credit for writing improvement over the course of the semester. From the start, however, take heed of this warning: **misspelling a client or major player's name more than once in a deliverable will automatically lower your grade.** Students with substantial writing challenges will be advised to visit the GWU Writing Center. It is quite good.

GSPM students arrive in Fundamentals with different levels of political knowledge and experience. We will perform benchmark assessments on your levels in the first two weeks of the course. This may result in variations in your written assignments and switches between groups. We are especially keen on ensuring that students from outside the United States have a good learning experience, in as much as the nominal focus of much of the course content is set in this nation. Throughout the course, you will be asked to demonstrate that you have developed more capacity for professional performance than you showed at the start of the course.

Upon request we will provide **extra steps you can take** to stretch your skills; you may also request or be assigned additional readings and assignment components to ensure that you are making the most of the semester. Extra credit may or may not come with fulfillment of these requests.

Standards of Conduct

As noted in the first part of this syllabus, students will be held to the George Washington University [Code of Academic Integrity](#). Please read it, paying particular attention to the section on **plagiarism** (you will have been tested on the plagiarism policy). Should you have any questions or concerns bring them directly to Professor Cornfield unless it has to do with his conduct toward you, in which case you may opt to contact the Program Director. Your confidentiality will be preserved in all instances.

Politics is contentious by definition. Now and then things will be said in class that will offend your values and perhaps make you angry. You should speak up and disagree when you want to contribute to class discussion. However, **personal attacks will not be tolerated** in the classroom or in course deliverables

(as they are, regrettably, in many real-world venues).

Late submissions and class absences will be accepted with advance permission via email request, and excused retroactively for emergencies. Grade penalties will apply at the rate of one point per 24 hours for non-emergencies and non-approved extensions. While all class sessions are important to attend, the simulation on December 2 is especially important.

Your classwork, oral and written, is regarded as private and confidential communication within the confines of the course. You are here to learn, and to do that you need to feel free to take chances, make mistakes, and hear polite and candid feedback.

THEREFORE: personal recordings of class sessions are strictly prohibited. Thursday night lectures and discussions will be recorded on Blackboard.

In addition, while you may draw on your classwork for real-world deliverables you may not receive any financial compensation for work done in this course.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are three books assigned for Fundamentals. They may be ordered (or downloaded) through Amazon (Kindle) and other booksellers. We do not use the GW Bookstore system. The first assignments from the books do not occur until week two of the class, so you have time to acquire them.

- Michael J. Burton, William Miller, and Daniel M. Shea, *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Praeger, 5th (2015) edition.
- Eitan Hersh, *Politics is for Power: How to Move Beyond Political Hobbyism, Take Action, and Make Real Change*. Scribner, 2020.
- Stephanie Vance, *The Influence Game: 50 Insider Tactics from the Washington D.C. Lobbying World That Will Get You to Yes*. Wiley & Sons, 2012.

Additional required readings can be found via the Electronic Reserves and through links provided ahead in the syllabus.

For some assignments you will be hunting and gathering information in order to produce quality deliverables on behalf of your mock client or employer. Provide citations in your deliverables for this researched information: any footnote, endnote, hyperlink, or parenthetical system of citation is accepted so long as it is consistent and legible.

The assigned readings contain important conceptual distinctions and historical interpretations you will find immensely useful in political management. You will be expected to apply these concepts and interpretations to situations posed in class and your assignments.

THE THIRD HOUR OF THE WEEK (aka THE PRACTICUM)

The new GSPM course format calls for two hours of weekly class sessions and an additional hour of structured but unsupervised meetings among students. Each week there will be a deliverable-oriented joint activity culminating in an individual submission of a memo or message. (In week two you will write an essay.)

It will be up to group members to decide how to organize this virtual hour (and it may last more or less time than an hour). We will be available to help with logistics and contents.

Don't hesitate to send us comments and suggestions on group dynamics. (See the rubric on group work in the Electronic Reserves.) Those will be held in confidence unless you are asked for and grant permission to share your identity along with your ideas should we decide to adopt them for a lesson.

THE SCHEDULE

1) September 30: COURSE OVERVIEW; INTRODUCTION TO POLLING.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Plan and purpose of the course; how polling works (and doesn't work) in political management. Guest lecture: Dr. Todd Belt.

READINGS:

- The Form of the Strategy Memo.
- PSR Tip Sheet on Question Wording
- GSPM/HarrisX 2021 Constitution Day Poll.
- A Proper Media Diet for (U.S.) Political Managers

ASSIGNMENT ONE: Poll Question Construction Memo. Due October 7, 5% of course grade. (Also submit answers to questionnaire about yourself; non-graded.)

2) October 7: LESSONS OF THE FOUNDERS; CAMPAIGN POLITICS AS A BUSINESS.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This is the history session. First, we'll learn about the campaign to ratify the U.S. Constitution –how the Federalists won and how their approach has stamped politics ever since. Second, we'll review the development of political consulting: factors behind the growth of the politics business in the last century; the peculiarities of the "politics market;" the connection between political consulting and innovations in communications technology.

READINGS:

- Chronology of Events – Founders.
- McDonald, *E Pluribus Unum*, Chapter Eight, "From the Many One."
- Michelle Nunn 2014 Campaign Memo Collection.
- Influence Game*, Introduction.
- Campaign Craft*, Introduction.
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ASSIGNMENT TWO: A short essay tied to the readings. THIS WILL NOT BE A MEMO, Due

October 14, 10% of course grade.

3) October 14: STRATEGIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION; DIGITAL POLITICKING.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Communications - traditional and digital; the politics of "official" political and persona accounts; the double-edged sword of public speaking while being live tweeted; former President Trump's use of traditional media once social media was no longer an

effective tool. In this session we'll also review your poll construction deliverables and form your mock client groups.

READINGS:

Influence Game, Chapters 2-4.
Campaign Craft, Part IV and Conclusion.
Group Work Rubric.

ASSIGNMENT THREE: Create a plan for your client in which each of you propose to undertake one aspect of a coordinated campaign to achieve a SMART goal. Due October 21, 10% of course grade.

4) October 21: RESEARCH TEMPLATES.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Templates are organizing schemes, ways of sorting information for use. Tonight we look at six of them: the message grid, the personal dossier, the Overton window, the player graph (or map), the properly drawn analogy, and the scenario tree. We'll also review your essay on the pros and cons of modularity in the politics business.

READINGS:

- Campaign Craft*, Parts I and II.
- Rick Tyler on Political Research.
- The Graph, Window, and Dossier.
- Eurasia Group, "Top Risks 2021."

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Create a plan that distributes research tasks among your team members. Due October 28, 5% of course grade.

5) October 28: STRATEGIC MESSAGING, NARRATING, AND ARGUMENTATION.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Hone critical appreciation for message, narrative, and argumentative skills. Understand similarities and differences among five modes of influence: text (spoken and written), video, media relations (dealing with journalists and info-tainers), online communications (web page and path architecture, social media), and statistics and infographics. We'll construct a bio spot storyboard and a fundraising argument. And we'll review your campaign scoping (SMART goal) plans.

READINGS (they are short!):

- "Story Basics" (a collection of tweets).

- Guideline Memos “Anatomy of A Speech Module” and “Values and Beliefs.”
- *Campaign Craft*, Part III.
- Media Top Ten List (by Megan Kindelan).
- Presentation Design Principles.
- The Rhetoric of Numbers.
- Ray Dalio – The Two Economies.
- Auditing Web Sites.

ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Create messages for your campaign client along with a cover memo. Due November 4, 15% of course grade.

**6) November 4: ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OFFICES;
POLITICAL MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENT.**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Compare and contrast government relations operations with interest groups and other organizational approaches to advocacy. Master the fine points of taking a political meeting: strategic, logistical, and rhetorical dimensions of recruiting individuals to join your coalition and lobbying decision-makers on policy matters. We'll also review your research plans.

READINGS:

- *Influence Game* Chapters 1, 5-10.
- The Necessary Art of Persuasion.
- The Advocacy Gap.
- Face-to-Face With Congress.
- Grassroots Public Policy Advocacy and Lobbying.

ASSIGNMENT SIX: Create engagement meeting memos for your campaign client. Due November 11, 10% of course grade.

7) November 11: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Key roles (challenger, incumbent, successor candidates and their entourages) and concepts (triage, issue positioning). Deep canvassing vs. slacktivism and other aspects of the contrast developed in the Hersh book. Review of your message deliverables.

READING: *Politics is for Power*, entire.

ASSIGNMENT SEVEN: Make and defend choices in a case study involving a recent (Spring 2021) candidate for Lt. Governor of Virginia, due November 18, 10% of course grade.

8) November 18: POLITICAL ANGER MANAGEMENT; CAMPAIGNS FOR DEMOCRACY.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Managing anger, which mobilizes people for politics as no other emotion can, yet stymies the politics requisite for good policymaking and governance. A public speaking exercise to show how speakers can summon or mute anger. How to campaign for democracy against tyranny. Review of your engagement deliverables. Briefing for the simulated summit.

READINGS:

- Presentation Tips.
- *The Dictator's Handbook*, Chapter 1, "The Rules of Politics."
- *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, especially Chapter 8 "Applying Political Defiance" and Appendix One, "The Methods of Non-Violent Action." <http://www.aeinstein.org/english/> (click on the icon of the pamphlet to download it as a pdf file).
- Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotion in Political Participation.

ASSIGNMENT EIGHT: Prepare your opening statements and negotiating strategies, as directed by the guideline memo to be distributed. Due December 2, 15% of course grade.

THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

9) December 2: NARRATING WHILE NEGOTIATING - A Simulated Summit.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Participate in a full-fledged simulation of a high-stakes, high-visibility decision-making summit where players weigh compromise, consensus, and confrontation, and negotiations are susceptible in part to outside statements as well as inside maneuvers. NOTE: Class will run three hours; no “third hour” this week.

READINGS:

- Summit Briefing Memo.
- Simulated Summit Negotiating Template.
- Gutmann and Thompson, “The Case for Compromise,” <http://harvardmagazine.com/2012/07/the-case-for-compromise>.

10) December 9: WHAT POLITICAL PROFESSIONALS DO.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: We debrief the simulation. We review the candidate case study. We learn about Max Weber’s view of the political world, featuring the tension between charismatic leaders and rationalist bureaucracies. We adapt a theoretical framework developed by Albert O. Hirschmann to consider your perennial options as a political professional.

READINGS:

- Excerpts from Max Weber, “Politics As A Vocation.”
- Negotiating Political Agreements.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT: Taking off from your simulation log and your self-learnings from the semester, and projecting them into a best-case scenario, write a short chapter of your memoirs. Due December 16, worth 20% of the grade.

Postscript:

Politics can be fun (it’s Vance’s last tip) so here are two recommended books that evoke the humor of being involved in politics.

Rick Ridder, *Looking for Votes in All the Wrong Places*. Radius, 2016. Uproarious tales and exceedingly smart rules from a lifetime on the campaign trail.

Barton Swaim, *The Speechwriter: A Brief Education in Politics*. Simon & Schuster, 2015. A witty and often scathingly funny autobiographical account of what it's like to work for a politician. Reflections on the uses and abuses of language in politics.

-END-

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.