

# The Graduate School of Political Management

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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## **M.P.S. in Political Management**

Summer 2021

5/18-7/20

## **Applied Political Communication**

PMGT 6402

3 Credits

Tuesdays

Class Location

### **Instructor**

Stami Williams

### **Biography**

Stami Williams is the communications director for Jack Ciattarelli's New Jersey gubernatorial campaign and an adjunct professor for George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management. Formerly, she was at the Republican State Leadership Committee, the only national organization committed to electing Republicans in state-level offices across all 50 states.

Stami has extensive experience on Capitol Hill, previously serving in the offices of U.S. Senators Saxby Chambliss and David Perdue from Georgia. She also served as the communications director to U.S. Representatives Jeb Hensarling of Texas, Karen Handel of Georgia, and Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

### **Contact Information**

Phone Number: (770) 712-5560

Email Address: [stamiwill@gwu.edu](mailto:stamiwill@gwu.edu)

### **Communication**

Please contact me by email at [stamiwill@gwu.edu](mailto:stamiwill@gwu.edu). I am very responsive and will get back to you within 24 hours.

Please feel free to contact me by text or call at (770) 712-5560 if you feel you haven't heard from me in a timely manner or if you'd just like to catch up about your progress.

### **Blackboard Site**

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or [helpdesk.gwu.edu](mailto:helpdesk.gwu.edu).

The course will meet online at 7:10 on Tuesdays via [Blackboard Collaborate / WebEx / Zoom].

### **Out-of-Class/Independent Learning Expectation**

Over the course of the semester, students will spend approximately two and one-half hours per week in combined online class meetings (synchronous learning) and engaged in asynchronous instructional learning activities (done weekly on one's own time). In addition to these required asynchronous and synchronous activities, reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are

expected to take up, on average, 8 ¾ hours per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 25 hours in instructional time (asynchronous and synchronous) and 87.5 hours preparing for class.

### **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.” Copying information and pasting it into a paper without a quotation and citation is an act of plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. For the first offense, the student will receive an “F” for the assignment and formal charges will be filed with the Office of Academic Integrity. For the second offense, charges will again be filed and the student will receive an “F” for the final course grade. Penalties for academic dishonesty are not negotiable. You will not be offered a “do-over” or resubmission. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>

### **Attendance Policy**

Understanding we are all professionals and also facing new challenges, please make every effort to come to virtual class. Please maintain contact with me if you are unable to attend or submit an assignment.

### **University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays**

Students must notify faculty as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the student must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester that they are enrolled in the course.

To the greatest extent possible, faculty must continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.

Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday must arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

For the full text of the policy and calendar of religious holidays, please see the [Office of the Provost’s Policies web page](#) (Religious Holidays document).

### **Online Classroom Conduct Policy**

You should behave in class as if you are in a professional setting. Unless you are having connection difficulties, **you are expected to activate your camera and to be present, attentive, and engaged during online course meetings.** Please do not attempt to multitask, as it is almost impossible to read something while simultaneously listening to something else. Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times.
- Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let’s give the benefit of the doubt.

- If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it as long as it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.
- When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
- Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

Your instructor reserves the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate for the discussion forum, blog, or wiki without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

### **Technology Requirements**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the [Technical Requirements and Support](#) web page. If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the [IT Support](#) website. GW is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. The following links provide more information about the accessibility of technologies that may be used in this course (delete all not needed):

- [Blackboard accessibility](#)
- [Microsoft Office accessibility](#)
- [Adobe accessibility](#)
- [Vimeo accessibility](#)
- [YouTube accessibility](#)
- [VoiceThread accessibility](#)
- [Webex accessibility](#)
- [Zoom accessibility](#)

If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact your instructor. You may also explore the [Disability Support Services](#) website (see above).

### **Technology Expectations**

Regarding technology skills, you should be able to (delete all not needed):

- Create documents and presentation slides
- Use a webcam and microphone
- Use a digital camera or scanner
- Upload files, including recordings and images
- Be open to learning and registering for new technologies
- Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
- Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology

If you have any problems with the technology expectations in this course, please contact your instructor.

### **Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings**

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the

instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact [Disability Support Services](#) if you need additional accommodations for accessing electronic course materials.

### **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. The Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 10) governs the rights attributed to owners of copyrighted work. Under certain circumstances, educational institutions may provide copies of copyrighted works to students. The copies may not be copied nor used for any other purpose besides private study, scholarship, or research. Users should not provide electronic copies of any materials provided on this course's Blackboard site to unauthorized users. If a user fails to comply with Fair Use restrictions, he/she may be held liable for copyright infringement. No further transmission or electronic distribution is permitted.

### **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 <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information call 202-994-5300 or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services website](#).

### **Title IX: Confidentiality and Responsible Employee Statement**

The George Washington University (GWU) and its faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. GWU strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty members are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit <https://haven.gwu.edu/>.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in Gelman Library at 2130 H St NW in Suite 221 and they can be reached at 202-994-3765 or via email at [gwriter@gwu.edu](mailto:gwriter@gwu.edu). You can [schedule writing center appointments](#), both in-person or by phone, in advance. Daytime and evening hours are available. Check for this semester's hours at the [writing center contact page](#). The Writing Center offers summer hours.

### **GWU Libraries**

Off campus students have full access to all of the research resources, services, and assistance that the Library offers. The GW community has access to 500+ online subscription databases and to millions of items, electronic and print, in the library catalog. Off-campus students even have additional privileges because the Library will FedEx print materials to your home. For more information visit the [GW Libraries homepage](#).

Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or [contact someone at the library](#) to answer any questions. For questions beyond “Do you have this book/article?” and “How do I login?” use the website mentioned to make a research consultation appointment with a librarian. Librarians are there to guide students through any aspect of the research process, from selecting and narrowing a topic, crafting a research strategy to citation management.

### **Safety and Security**

- **In an emergency:** call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or call 911
- **For situation-specific actions:** review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)
- **In an active violence situation:** [Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out](#)
- **Stay informed:** review [notification tools for staying informed during emergency and safety related situations](#)

### **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](mailto:tbelt@gwu.edu) | 202-994-4363

Suzanne Farrand  
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM  
[sfarrand@gwu.edu](mailto:sfarrand@gwu.edu) | 202-994-9309

## **THE COURSE**

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### **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 their 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 exercise excellent written communication and time management skills.

### **Course Description and Overview**

In politics, there is not ‘one road’ or a secret prescription to success. This class, however, will provide you with a good idea of what you should have as you prepare to interview for a communications role on a campaign. Take it from me, someone who was previously in your shoes and has (successfully!) landed a job with my GSPM materials as a writing sample, and most recently, utilizing a version of this same communications plan as a starting point. Never forget, every state is different, every level of government is different, and every single year is different – don’t get caught up trying to replicate every piece of work you have seen or done before. Emerging technology in the next four years could render something you’ve done before completely useless.

This is your starting point! I am very excited you’re here and I look forward to a great learning experience for both you and me this summer semester. After a tough and draining past year, I hope we can work on a project that makes us excited for class and ready for the future.

You may have noticed there are only two gubernatorial races taking place this ‘off-year’: New Jersey and Virginia. While the masses from D.C. rush to Virginia, there is something special happening in another state not too far away – the fascinating and surprising Garden State.

Through this class I want you to know one thing: your thoughts and opinions are always valued *and* respected. While we will certainly have partisan discussions, it is my goal to make sure you know you have an open forum to discuss and share your opinions and facts. I have no doubt we are each capable of being respectful of one another.

The other component is for you to know you can always reach out to me and ask questions. There is no such thing as a stupid question, and I have an open-door policy for whenever you need it.

This course is designed for you to learn what it really means to be a political communicator. Together, we will build a foundation for a good communications plan. The course will focus on understanding the uses for specific tools, communication methods, and connecting the dots on how to design a communications strategy to achieve specific campaign goals. The course will help you better communicate internally and externally within your political campaign.

It is my sincere hope to see you out there on the campaign trail, if you're not there already, and maybe one day work together.

### Course Learning Objectives

Here is what you can hope to gain from this course:

1. Get the fundamentals of building a communications plan
2. Learn the difference between earned and paid media and what each entail
3. Gain the ability to analyze your media markets and build a strategy that fits your candidate and state
4. Real-time view of a gubernatorial race during an interesting and pivotal time
5. Understand the inner workings of a campaign and learn how to make it a successful dynamic

### Course Requirements

Students are required to attend class weekly, submit assignments and discussion posts on time, and work diligently to complete their final communications plan on time.

### Evaluation and Grading

Note: The earlier you submit your assignment, the sooner you will great a grade!

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed [#]	Due Date	Weight
Discussion 1.1: Introduce Yourself	Five	Initial 5/20, Peer 5/23	5%
Assignment 1.1: 2021 New Jersey Gubernatorial Election	Three	5/23	10%
Assignment 2.1: Branding Your Candidate	One	5/30	10%
Discussion 3.1: State Demographics (New Jersey)	Three	Initial 6/3, Peer 6/6	5%
Discussion 4.1: Know New Jersey's Media Environment	Two	Initial 6/10, Peer 6/13	5%

Assignment 5.1: Rapid Response and Thriving in Adversity (New Jersey)	Five	6/20	10%
Assignment 6.1: Practicing Your Writing for Social Media Skills	Two	6/27	10%
Communications Final Project Plan	All	7/13	35%
In-Person or Video Presentation of Your Communications Plan (7/20)	All	7/20	10%
Total			100%

Following 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 grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

\*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

#### Required Text and Learning Materials

None

**Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials**

Will provide list in discussion, no texts required.

**Tentative Course Calendar\***

\*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

**Class Date: Tuesday, May 18**

Week 1

Topic and Content Covered: Introduction, Class Comradery, Syllabus Review, Final Plan Discussion)

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Understanding what is expected of you and getting acclimated

Assignment(s) Due:

Discussion post due **Thursday, May 20**

Responses to peer discussion posts due **Sunday, May 23**

Assignment 1.1 due **Sunday, May 23**

**Class Date: Tuesday, May 25**

Week 2

Topic and Content Covered: Branding Your Candidate

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Fundamentals of a communications plan

Assignment(s) Due:

Assignment 2.1 due **Sunday, May 30**

**Class Date: Tuesday, June 1**

Week 3

Topic and Content Covered: Audiences, Demographics, Messaging

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Understanding what you need to have a successful campaign, analyzing a state's needs

Assignment(s) Due:

Discussion 3.1 initial post due **Thursday, June 3**

Responses to peer discussion posts due **Sunday, June 6**

**Class Date: Tuesday, June 8**

Week 4

Topic and Content Covered: Understanding your media environment

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Learning the difference between paid and earned media

Assignment(s) Due:

Discussion 4.1 initial post due **Thursday, June 10**

Responses to peer discussion posts due **Sunday, June 13**

**Class Date: Tuesday, June 15**

Week 5

Topic and Content Covered: Crisis Communications

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Understanding the inner workings of a team

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment 5.1 due **Sunday, June 20**

**Class Date: Tuesday, June 22**

Week 6

Topic and Content Covered: Writing for social media, speechwriting

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Learning about paid and earned media

Assignment(s) Due:

Assignment 6.1 due **Sunday, June 27**

**Class Date: Tuesday, June 29**

Week 7

Topic and Content Covered: Pandora's Box

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Fundamentals of a communications plan

Assignment(s) Due:

No assignment due on **July 4** – Happy Independence Day!

**Class Date: Tuesday, July 6**

Week 8

Topic and Content Covered: Tying up loose ends and questions before the final project is submitted

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: All

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Final assignment is due **Sunday, July 11**

**Class Date: July 13**

Week 9

Topic and Content Covered: What makes a campaign team?

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: All

Assignment(s) Due:

Presentation of your communications plan on **July 20**.

**Class Date: Tuesday, July 20**

Week 10

Topic and Content Covered: Final Project Presentation and Closing Thoughts

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: All

Assignment(s) Due Today: Final project presentation!