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# THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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WASHINGTON, DC

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

PMGT6438 STATE AND LOCAL CAMPAIGNS  
Summer 2017

## COURSE SYLLABUS

**Instructor:** Mark Meissner

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**Weekly Chat Time:** Monday 9 - 10 pm ET

**Current job:** I am the Founder and President of MJM Strategies, a strategic communications consulting company.

**Lead Instructor Bio:** Mark Meissner is a crisis and litigation communications advisor to Fortune 100 and emerging industry leaders in the health and life sciences, energy, transportation, media, real estate and financial services industries. He has in-depth experience in corporate, coalition, association and nonprofit communications and ally development. Mr. Meissner routinely works with corporate leadership teams to develop communications and prepare for high-profile media interviews. He is one of the country's leading public affairs strategists and grassroots organizers. Mr. Meissner works with organizational leadership to win in the court of public opinion, bringing data and science to bear and ensuring messaging is clear and resonates with stakeholders. Over the past decade, he has helped navigate through early- and late-phase crisis situations and mobilized powerful allies to strengthen clients' reputations in their marketplaces. His work in crisis communications includes programs designed to meet regulatory and legal objectives during major data security breaches, accidents, leaks and government investigations. With reputations on the line, Mr. Meissner has prepared newsmakers for high-pressure interviews with the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, CNN, USA Today, the Washington Post and 60 Minutes. Mr. Meissner's professional background is in electoral and congressional politics. He served as campaign manager for former U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer (D-IN) and served as a Senate staffer for former U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh (D-IN). Mr. Meissner was a candidate for U.S. Congress himself in 2002, finishing second in a field of five candidates vying for the Democratic nomination in Indiana's Second Congressional District. He is an adjunct professor at The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management (GSPM) and serves as a speaker on running for local office.

**Course description:** This course is designed for students who are interested in seeking public office or managing a political campaign. Students will learn the framework for dealing with the challenges and conflicts that arise during the course of a political campaign. Students will be asked to choose a

specific local office that they would like to run for and then write a detailed campaign plan designed for that particular race. Most importantly, students will learn to think about campaigning for office in a more strategic and organized manner.

**Course objectives:** Students who successfully complete this course should be able to implement your campaign plan in the real world of politics. My hope is that your campaign plan will be complete enough that it will lay the foundation for your first run for public office or for positioning you to manage your first political campaign.

**Required Textbook and Materials:**

- Ronald Faucheux, *Winning Elections: Political Campaign Management, Strategy, and Tactics*, 2003, M. Evans and Company. ISBN-13: 978-1590770269
- Catherine Shaw, *The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections*, 5th Edition, Westview Press. ISBN-13: 978-0813348636
- Jeff Blodgett, Bill Lofy, Ben Goldfarb, and Erik Peterson, *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: A Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*, 2008, University of Minnesota Press. ISBN-13: 978-0816653331
- Agranoff, Craig and Tabin, Herbert. *Socially Elected: How to Win Elections Using Social Media* (2011). Pendant Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0578092164
- McNamara, Michael. *The Political Campaign Desk Reference*. (2012). Outskirts Press. ISBN-13: 978-1432787325

**Course Grading:**

Evaluation Categories	Weighting
Stump Speech	20%
Final Campaign Plan	80%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading Descriptions:**

**Discussions**

Participation in class discussions is critical to student learning and to exhibit that the required reading and research is being completed. It is also vital to getting to know your fellow students in order to learn from each other.

**Final Campaign Plan**

Completing the final campaign plan (Assignment 6.3) is the primary purpose of this class. You will work each week on a different section of your campaign plan. You will be asked to select and research a particular political office within the first week of class. Watch the Week 1 Overview video for further guidelines. Once you have selected a specific political office, you will PMGT 6438 - State

and Local Campaigns 7 spend the remainder of the semester writing a campaign plan designed to win an election for that office.

- Submitting Assignment 6.3 is mandatory.
- Submitting all other weekly assignments is optional, but your instructor and facilitator are more than happy to review your work along the way should you want their feedback.
- You can also post your assignments to the designated discussion boards for your classmates to view and provide constructive feedback (participating in these discussion boards is optional).

### **Final Campaign Plan Grading**

Since all campaign plans vary in scope and purpose, this is a flexible point system. You may find that some of the expectations outlined below may not apply to your campaign—in this case, please describe why it does not apply. Or you may not be able to submit the information requested—in this case, please at least indicate the specific source where you will obtain that information. Your instructor and facilitators will take these things into account and adjust the marking based on the context of your campaign plan. The campaign plan is broken into weekly assignments. These weekly assignments are not graded (except for those marked as discussions) but you are encouraged to post them to the Section Open Discussion Forum in the Course Essentials space to get input from your classmates.

*Log in to the course to access the instructions for each part of your campaign plan.*

### **Uploading and Sharing Videos**

This course includes an assignment in which you will need to upload and share a video with your classmates. To record your video, you may use any video camera available to you. Common options include:

- Webcam
- Video camera such as a Flip
- Camera with video recording capability

The best method is to then upload your recorded video to a hosting site that will automatically format it and provide you a link to share. There are numerous options available and most provide the ability to make your video private by generating a unique link that you can share or offering password protection. Be sure to include any information that your classmates and/or instructor need to easily access your video. While you may use any site to host and share your video, here are two recommendations:

- Vimeo
  - You may set a password for your video with Vimeo under Settings.
- YouTube

- You may create an unlisted video under Broadcasting and Sharing Options.
- You may record directly into YouTube using your webcam.

### Grading Scale

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.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss a discussion, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor. It is also the student's responsibility to review lecture notes and complete the readings as assigned. Regardless of the reason for missing a discussion, you will not be able to make up missed class participation points.

### Academic Honesty Policy

The strength of the university and this program depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. Anyone breaching this policy is subject to expulsion from the master's degree program.

### Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services at 202 - 994 - 8250 or [dss@gwu.edu](mailto:dss@gwu.edu).

## **A QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING**

You will be required to do a lot of scholarly and legal writing in this class and in your other classes. This quick guide will give you some important, basic tools and rules for good writing.

### **Rules for Good Scholarly Writing**

Consider WHY you are writing and HOW your reader will use your writing.

Keep your tone formal at all times.

Use precise language. You don't need to use big words or obscure words, but be sure that the words you use say exactly what you mean.

Do not use the first or second person – use only the third person.

Do not speak directly to the reader.

Do not use clichés or colloquialisms. A cliché is a pre-packaged verbal unit that cannot possibly convey precisely what you mean.

Do not state your opinion. State the facts and your analysis, not your opinion, of them.

You must support every assertion you make.

Do not use emotionally charged or loaded words. Your argument will be far more powerful if you present it dispassionately.

Do not ask rhetorical questions.

Do not begin sentences with dependent clauses.

Use the active, not the passive, voice.

Keep your sentences short and to the point.

Keep your paragraphs short.

Each paragraph should express only one thought or element.

Each paragraph should serve a purpose; it should move your argument or analysis forward.

Each paragraph should contain a topic sentence, a few supporting details, and a transition sentence.

The topic sentence in each paragraph should be an element of your argument, position, or theme.

The reader should be able to read just the first sentence of every paragraph of your paper and follow the entire line of your argument or theme of your subject.

Do not use legalese unless it is necessary.

Never use a big word just for the sake of using a big word—use the best word for the purpose.

Never use extra words: “in order to” should be “to,” “for the reason that” should be “because.”

Be sure you truly understand the proper way to use moreover, furthermore, however, therefore, therefor, wherein, etc. before you use them.

Do not begin a sentence with the words “however” or “but.”

Avoid gender issues by using the plural form wherever possible, e.g. “Good attorneys communicate with their paralegals,” not “A good attorney communicates with his or her paralegal.”

### [The George Washington University Writing Center](#)

GW Writing Center offers a variety of resources to assist you with all aspects of writing, including choosing a topic, conducting research, constructing a sentence or paragraph, and framing an argument.

George Washington University Writing Center

This is the Writing Center's home page. You can find the center's hours, tutor information, events, and policies here.

### [GW Writing Center Resources Page](#)

This will take you directly to the resources page. You will find tutorials on brainstorming, developing a thesis, outlining, revising, grammar, and other essential writing skills. You will also find the GW Code of Academic Integrity. This important document sets out GW's policies on work product, citation, copying, and plagiarism. Be sure to read this in its entirety, as you are bound by it.

#### **Citing Responsibly: A Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism**

[https://www.law.gwu.edu/sites/www.law.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Citing\\_Responsibly\\_2013\\_14.pdf](https://www.law.gwu.edu/sites/www.law.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Citing_Responsibly_2013_14.pdf)

This website will give you direction on how and what to cite to avoid inadvertently plagiarizing materials.

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