

# The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**M.P.S. in Political Management**  
Fall  
2019

**Digital Strategy**  
6452.10  
3 Credits

Wednesdays, 6:10-8:00pm  
1776 G St. NW, C-110  
September 29 – December 8, 2021

## **BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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### **Instructor: Sue Zoldak, Founder, The Zoldak Agency, Zoldak Victory, Zoldak Research**

Sue Zoldak creates ground-breaking digital and social media campaigns, builds grassroots and advocacy campaigns, and provides leading-edge advertising and media strategy. She succeeds by bringing a Madison Avenue mentality to public affairs, unafraid to bring uncommon ideas to the table. Determined to get inside the mind of audiences and find out what gets them to act, she tirelessly seeks to deploy the right tools, but only as part of a sound strategy. Sue is often sought for her insights by those developing new digital platforms and advocacy services. As an industry connector, Sue convenes a 1,400-person networking group called DC Media Peeps, the largest and fastest growing happy hour for public affairs, communications, digital and advertising professionals. Visit [www.dcmEDIApeeps.com](http://www.dcmEDIApeeps.com) to join her networking group.

### **Contact Information**

**PREFERRED** Email: [suezoldak@gwu.edu](mailto:suezoldak@gwu.edu)

**WHEN URGENT OR WHEN SCHEDULED FOR CALL** Cell Phone: (202) 306-3012 (please identify yourself by name in the text when texting)

**SCHEDULE A CHECK IN** <https://calendly.com/sue-zoldak/15min>

### **Communication**

Please first attempt to contact me by e-mail, unless it is an emergency, in which case you may reach me on my mobile phone. Mobile text is okay (and preferred over voicemail) for brief, urgent messages as long as you include your full name in the body of the text each time. I will respond within 24 hours to all student e-mails. If you would like to arrange an appointment to see me one-on-one, please e-mail me at least 48 hours in advance and we will arrange a meeting or call.

### **Blackboard Site**

A Blackboard website has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to use the site to access readings, submit papers, engage in discussion board conversations, and obtain their grades. In short, Blackboard will be the **primary venue** for outside classroom communications. Students can access the site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Tech support is available at 202-

994-4948 or <http://helpdesk.gwu.edu>.

### **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>.

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

- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
- Faculty should 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 should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

### **Support for Students with Disabilities**

George Washington University’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. Please also be sure to notify me of your disability, should you require accommodations. Additional information is available at [www.gwu.edu/~dss](http://www.gwu.edu/~dss).

### **In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis During Class**

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we must leave here, we will meet at the lobby level of the Media & Public Affairs Building (805 21st Street, NW) to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University’s operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu>.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attending class is required. Students will sign a time card indicating their presence in class each week. Should you find yourself with a scheduling conflict, please contact me as soon as you are aware of the issue to let me know that you will absent, otherwise, it will be considered an unexcused absence and it will negatively count against your participation grade. Simply put, you

must attend class to participate. In addition, examples of class assignments will be explained and shown in class. **Three or more class unexcused absences during the fall semester will result in a failing class participation grade.** Please follow current COVID-19 guidelines when it comes to class attendance.

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

Over the course of the semester, students will spend 110 minutes per week in class. Required reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 4 hours (240 minutes) per week on up. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 10 classes in instructional time and 36 hours preparing for class (9 weeks of assignments).

### **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. Over the last two years, I have achieved one of the highest survey completion rates on the survey at GSPM!** Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any of the following:

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

Todd L. Belt  
Professor and Director, Political Management Program  
phone: 202-994-4363  
email: [tbelt@gwu.edu](mailto:tbelt@gwu.edu)

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND GSPM EXPECTATIONS**

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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 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.

## **THE COURSE**

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### **Course Description and Overview**

This class is an introduction to digital strategy as part of a modern communications effort, with an emphasis on political, public affairs, and advocacy communications. We will begin by covering the origins of social media and the rise of digital platforms. It is important to understand why certain platforms were invented, what void these platforms filled then and now for the user, and what users expect to get out of their digital universe before one can take advantage of these platforms for communicating effectively as a professional strategist. In other words, you cannot influence someone unless you know where, how, and why they consume information. We will quickly move on to how to create digital content, how to target audiences, how to place and program advertising, and how to measure results. Along the way, we will hear from experts in the field about real world applications and case studies.

Students can expect to come away with the knowledge of how to create a digital communications plan, how to pitch that plan, how to budget for that plan, how to execute both an organic and a paid digital plan, and how to quantify results. You will also come away with an expert-level understanding of the history of social media.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will;

1. Understand the history of digital mediums and social networks. It is impossible to prepare for the future without understanding the past. While this may seem like a very philosophical approach to a digital strategy class, it is imperative that you understand the digital environment we live in and the history of how we got here not just as a user but as a digital expert and historian. Over time, you will begin to see why the “origin story” of digital mediums is so important to our survival in an ever-changing world. The assigned books serve to support this objective.
2. Understand the current public policy issues and trends that impact the job of a digital strategist. The world we operate in as digital strategists changes every day. Whether it is a Facebook policy change or an FTC ruling, knowing how to keep up with trends and public policy is what makes you a good digital counselor. The weekly trending topic submissions and discussions will serve to support this objective.
3. Understand the basics of running a digital and social media advertising campaign. Without a doubt one of the most requested skills for new entrants into the field of digital is knowledge of how to run a paid advertising campaign. We will walk through the steps of launching ads on Facebook. We will also walk through the vocabulary necessary to build a digital media plan at large. Bring your laptop to class for a hands-on experience – the best way to remember how to do this is to try it.
4. Be able to write a complete digital media communications plan. Week by week, you will build the skills to develop a full digital media communications plan. We will discuss how to explore both strategy and tactics, messaging and creative, calendars and budgets. Assignments will culminate in a semester project and presentation.

### Course Requirements

Bolded items are those related to your semester-long individual project.

- (1) Trending Topic Weekly Submission - Due Weeks 2 through 9
- (2) **Audience Matrix and Persona Assignments** – Due Week 3
- (3) **Project Proposal** – Due Week 4
- (4) **Advocacy Brief** – Due Week 5
- (5) **Editorial Calendar** – Due Week 6
- (6) **UTM Tagging Protocol** – Due Week 7
- (7) Squarespace Website – Due Week 8
- (8) **Final Semester Project Memo and Video Presentation** – Due Week 10
- (9) Class Participation - Includes attendance, participation in discussion, demonstration of having read assigned reading material, asking questions, showing developing insight and expertise for the material, and seeking help when needed = 10% of grade
- (10) Class Reading – due throughout and necessary for full class participation

### Evaluation and Grading

**Please note: All assignments are due at Noon ET on Due Date.**

Assignment	Description and Learning Objective(s)	Due Date	Points	Weight
Trending Topics	<p>Choose a news article(s) or trending topic in digital or social media, internet policy, advertising, or political advertising (not just politics, this is not a politics class). Read the article(s), summarize the topic, supply at least 1 supporting link to help illustrate the topic and WHY IT MATTERS to a digital strategist. State why this is important knowledge for class. Topics will be chosen at random to start class discussion. Be prepared to give an overview of your chosen topic when called upon. This is DUE on BLACKBOARD weekly. Further instructions can be found on Blackboard Discussion Board.</p>	<p><a href="#">Due Weeks 2 through 9</a></p>	<p>40 out of 40 (5 points each)</p>	<p>20%</p>
Audience Matrix and Persona	<p>This assignment is about demonstrating an understanding of your target audience, knowing what action you need them to take on your behalf, and defining the “voice” that you will use to speak to them online.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete one audience matrix that shows the target audience that you want to reach for your project</li> <li>2. Complete one persona of ONE of the main audiences listed in your matrix</li> </ol>	<p><a href="#">Due Week 3: 10/13</a></p>	<p>20 out of 20 (10 points each)</p>	<p>10%</p>
Project Proposal	<p>Choose an organization or issue advocacy campaign around which your semester project, a full digital media communications plan, will be based. Explain the mission of the organization or campaign and an overview what your plan will accomplish for them. Pretend you are pitching as an agency executive to an entity that is seeking help from a digital firm or asking for a budget from your boss at work to execute a campaign of your choice.</p>	<p><a href="#">Due Week 4: 10/20</a></p>	<p>10 out of 10</p>	<p>5%</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit a paragraph explanation of what your semester project will be about, including:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. who is the target organization you are speaking to</li> <li>b. what is the goal you are trying to accomplish with the campaign, and</li> <li>c. what is the time frame in which the campaign will be run</li> <li>d. who you are writing the proposal as</li> </ol> </li> </ol>			
Advocacy Brief	Write a 1-page brief on how issue advocacy will be used in your final campaign project.	<a href="#">Due Week 5: 10/27</a>	20/20	10%
Editorial Calendars	<p>This assignment is about how to plan out content for a month (detailed calendar) as well as a year (broad calendar). Editorial calendars help digital teams stay on message and coordinate tactics with strategy. Examples will be provided in class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete one thematic calendar</li> <li>2. Complete one time-based calendar</li> </ol> <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete one short-term calendar that shows frequency per week/month</li> <li>2. Complete one long-term calendar that shows tactics to be used across entire campaign or year</li> </ol>	<a href="#">Due Week 6: 11/3</a>	20 out of 20	10%

UTM Tagging Protocol	<p>This assignment is to demonstrate understanding of how to create UTM tracking links and a protocol for defining campaign-wide usage for the Campaign, Content, Medium, and Source fields. UTM tagging is the underlying method behind tracking results of various digital efforts in a Google Analytics dashboard. Examples will be provided in class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit a key that lists how you will use UTM tags to track links in your ad campaign for performance. You should have multiple tags in each of these buckets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Campaign</li> <li>b. Source</li> <li>c. Medium</li> <li>d. Content</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Explain your tagging system in an accompanying paragraph.</p>	<a href="#">Due Week 7: 11/10</a>	10 out of 10	5%
Squarespace Website	<p>Sometimes your client needs a basic website in one week or even one day. This exercise will be started in class and is meant to demonstrate your ability to create a functional website under a very tight deadline. You must demonstrate understanding of basic web usability principles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sign up for a trial account and create a website on Squarespace. The trial only lasts 14 days so please do not start your trial any earlier than 11/4 to give me time to grade this assignment.</li> </ol>	<a href="#">Due Week 9: 12/1</a>	20 out of 20	10%
Final Semester Project	<p>The final semester project, a written memo and a slide presentation, will include elements assigned throughout the course (refined as necessary based on feedback). The final memo should include a.) background on the organization or issue advocacy</p>	<a href="#">Due at Noon the Friday after last class: 12/10</a>	50 out of 50	25%



	<p>campaign chosen; b.) a campaign proposal and overview of what the digital plan will accomplish c.) challenges and opposition analysis; d.) campaign messaging; e.) target audiences and an audience matrix; f.) campaign creative rational and persona; g.) editorial calendar; h.) advertising plans; i.) goals; j.) and budget. The final presentation must be a 5-page slide deck to present to class that provides a 30,000-foot view of your campaign plan. The November 15<sup>th</sup> class will include dedicated time to ask questions about this project.</p> <p>You will also be required to submit a 5-to-8-minute recorded video of you presenting the highlights of your memo from a high level.</p>			
Class Participation	Includes attendance, participation in discussion, demonstration of having read assigned reading material, asking questions, showing developing insight and expertise for the material, and seeking help when needed.	Weekly	10 out of 10	5%
			<b>200 Total Possible</b>	<b>100%</b>

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 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.

### Weekly Assignment Due Date

Weekly assignments must be turned in digitally **by NOON ET on the date due**, usually the Wednesday of class unless otherwise instructed. Turning in an assignment any time after 12 pm ET on the due date up until 12 pm of the following day is considered *one day late* (see Late Assignments below). This is because I like the chance to review submissions prior to class so that I can address any overall shared lessons or observations. By turning in your assignment late, you are jeopardizing how much your classmates may gain from the class by restricting my ability to give quality, timely feedback. Thank you!

### Late Assignments

For each day that an assignment is late (one day is counted as after 12 pm ET on the due date until 12 pm ET on the following day), it will be marked down 10 percentage points (e.g., from a 90% to an 80%). If you believe you have a legitimate "emergency" that makes it so that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please notify me as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements. A one-time extension may be made to the due date for emergency situations. No deadline will be extended more than once. Late assignments should still be turned in as multiple late or missing assignments will begin to also impact your class participation grade despite class attendance record.

### Classroom Technology Policy

Students are welcome to bring a laptop or tablet computer to class for the purpose of taking notes but are cautioned against letting it become a distraction or otherwise causing disengagement from the class discussion. Some classes will require you to work on your laptop, such as classes where we practice programming Facebook ads. It is expected that you do not have extraneous browser windows or chat dialogues, etc., open during class.

### Classroom Social Media Policy

The contents of presentations and lectures, including statements and questions made by the professor as well as students during open discussion, are intended only for the benefit of enrolled students and should be considered "off the record." With the exception of thanking guest speakers or engaging with brands and campaigns for the purposes of classwork, students are expected to refrain from posting about the contents of this course on Twitter, Facebook, or other social media platforms. **Please do not take photos of slides or screen shares. No digital recording during class of any kind is permitted. Student comments in class are not to be**

**shared via social media.**

### **Required Text and Learning Materials**

Digital is a fast-moving space. Digital experts are defined by their ability to spot trends, understand changes to platforms, and anticipate public policy issues that impact our profession. Therefore, one of the expectations of this class is that you will be responsible for bringing to class knowledge of key events and developments for class discussion. That means we will rely less on pre-assigned reading and more on you being responsible for staying up to date using such resources as Ad Age, Social Media Today, Mashable, Inc.com, Wired.com, etc. When exploring a topic (i.e. Facebook's recent change to their mission statement or an article about net neutrality as a public policy issue), it is important to explore multiple sources about the same topic. We will look at every topic from multiple angles and the expectation is that you will be open to discussion. It is important to study developments under two lenses: 1.) what caused this to happen and 2.) how does this effect my job as a digital strategist. **Each week, you are to submit one Discussion form topic with a supporting links for possible class discussion with a rationale on why you think this topic is important to a digital strategies. More details on this assignment will be given out the first day of class.**

Listed below are the **1 books** you'll need to purchase or borrow from the library. **ALL other readings will be assigned weekly or as it happens in the news. If you have any trouble securing reading assignments for any reason, please contact me immediately.**

### **Required Reading (in order of reading):**

1. Kirkpatrick, David. *The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That Is Connecting the World*, 2011. (<https://www.amazon.com/Facebook-Effect-Inside-Company-Connecting/dp/1439102120/>)

### **Optional Additional Reading:**

2. Bilton, Nick. *Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal*, 2014. (<https://www.amazon.com/Hatching-Twitter-Story-Friendship-Betrayal/dp/1591847087/>)
3. Levy, Steven. *In The Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives*, 2011 (<https://www.amazon.com/Plex-Google-Thinks-Works-Shapes/dp/1416596585/>)

Please note: Watching “the Facebook movie” does NOT count as reading the book. If you have read these books in the past (more than a year ago), please re-read them for this class. If you have watched the movie or wish to re-watch it, only do so after you have read the book *for this class*.

## 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. An updated Course Calendar will always be available on Blackboard under Syllabus.

### Additional content each week:

1. [Time Permitting] Sneak peek: A currently running or recent digital campaign behind the scenes. No photography or recording of data or screen views.
2. Guest Speakers – These are being booked in real time and subject to change.

## September 29 – Week 1 – Introduction to Class

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Introductions and class overview**
  - a. Walk through syllabus.
  - b. Class poll on what you want to get out of this class (mobile device needed to participate)
  - c. Class introductions. Tell us what you do, why you are interested in digital strategy, how you have used digital communications professionally, and what you most want to get out of the class.
  - d. Class discussion. What issues do you think are pressing for digital strategists in the current climate? Why do we need to be aware of current events?
2. **Case Study:** Ending the Hall Tax in Tennessee
  - a. An example of a digital marketing campaign for legislative advocacy
3. **Project:** Introduction of semester project
  - a. Overview of project requirements
  - b. Choosing an issue and campaign
    - i. What is the goal?
    - ii. What will define the beginning and end of the campaign?
    - iii. What is a realistic budget?
    - iv. How will digital fit into the big picture?
4. **Explanation of repeating weekly assignment – Trending Topic**

*Assignment for Week 2 (DUE October 6):*

1. [THIS IS A REPEATING WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT.] *Post Trending Topic to Blackboard:* Submit a trending topic pertaining to the digital space for class discussion next week with at least 1 supporting link, more than 1 link can be provided. [This is No. 1 of 8 occurrences of this assignment]  
Format:
  - a. *Discussion title – what issue or question are you bringing to class?*
  - b. *Supporting links – what article(s) made you want to discuss this topic?*
  - c. *Summary – one or two sentence of the article, TL:DR*

- d. *Questions/opinions for discussion – what questions do you have for the class or the professor? And/or what is your opinion on this topic? What observation or statement do you want to share with the class about this topic?*

A few topics will be selected at random for discussion in next week's class. You will not know in advance if you will be selected to share in class, be prepared. All submissions will be graded regardless of whether your topic is chosen for live discussion.

2. Begin reading ***The Facebook Effect***, Prologue plus Chapters 1 to 2. You may want to read further, if possible, to alleviate a heavier assignment load next week.
3. Submit project proposal describing the issue advocacy organization or campaign you will be using for your semester project

## October 6 – Week 2 – Audience & Voice / Editorial Calendars

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news) – class discussion
  - b. Campaign emails and social – What have we observed / class discussion
2. **Book:** The Facebook Effect book discussion
3. **Audience and Voice** – Why defining your audience and voice is the first step to any communications plan
  - a. Creating an audience matrix
  - b. Creating an audience persona
4. **Creating an editorial calendar** – how to schedule content
  - a. Thematic vs. time-based calendars
5. **Case Study/Intensive Study:** A look at a quantitative analysis deck from state think tank
  - a. Why conduct opinion polling?
  - b. How do we use it to instruct a digital campaign?
  - c. What are some basic terms of polling that a digital strategist must understand?
  - d. How do we use polling to target audiences online?

*Assignment for Week 3 (DUE October 13):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [2 of 8]
2. Continue reading ***The Facebook Effect***, Chapters 3 to 5
3. Create your audience matrix (detailed assignment will be posted on BB)
4. Create your audience persona (detailed assignment will be posted on BB)

## October 13 – Week 3 – Social Media Advertising

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Guest speaker:** Katie Harbath, Anchor Change, formerly of Facebook
2. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news)
3. How to read Facebook Page Insights
4. How to launch a Facebook advertising campaign

- a. Creating Facebook ads from start to finish
5. What is different about other social ad self-serve platforms
  - a. Twitter
  - b. LinkedIn
6. **CASE STUDY/CLASS INTENSIVE:** Should we be allowed to advertise on social during elections?
  - a. “Cambridge Analytica”
  - b. The state of political advertising regulations
  - c. Current ethical concerns

*Assignment for Week 4 (October 20):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [3 of 8]
2. Continue reading ***The Facebook Effect***, Chapters 6 to 9
3. Submit your Project Proposal (Topic Choice)

## October 20 – Week 4 – Digital Advertising & Advocacy

**NOTE: THIS CLASS WILL BE VIRTUAL OVER BB ULTRA AS I WILL BE OUT OF TOWN. MORE INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED.**

**Please see your Blackboard Collaborate Section inside BB for the Course Link.**

*Topic to be covered:*

1. What is issue advocacy and how is digital a key component?
  - a. What is considered (digital) advocacy today?
  - b. How is advocacy measured by Congress?
  - c. Does it work? Are traditional methods better? Has the pandemic upended the status quo?
  - d. Facebook Townhall feature
2. **Case Study:** Council for Responsible Nutrition Launches Advocacy Blitz in Under 24 Hours
  - a. Running a digital issue advocacy campaign for grassroots recruitment
  - b. Using Facebook ads to recruit advocates
3. **CLASS DEMO / ON YOUR OWN:** How to draft grassroots and advocacy actions
  - a. Best practices for advocacy actions
  - b. Email and copy writing class exercise: Write email copy, banner ad copy, and landing page copy for your issue campaign
4. **Historic Campaign Case Study:** Harry & Louise – a look at the campaign that launched issue advocacy advertising in the early ‘90’s

*Assignment for Week 5 (DUE October 27):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [4 of 8]
2. Continue reading ***The Facebook Effect***, Chapters 10 to 12
3. Advocacy Brief: Write a 1-page brief on how issue advocacy will be used in your final campaign project

## October 27 – Week 5 – Editorial Calendars, Buying, & Budgeting

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news) – class discussion
2. Guest Speakers: TBD
3. Buying and budgeting digital campaigns
  - a. What is direct vs programmatic?
  - b. What is sponsored content?
  - c. What are different ways ads can be targeted?
  - d. How do cookies work?
4. Editorial Calendars
  - a. How do they help plan a campaign for both organic and paid content
  - b. Short v long term calendars
  - c. Thematic vs tactical/time-based (phase based) calendars
5. Overall budgeting template for common digital ads
  - a. What is Net vs. Gross
  - b. Using a percent or pie chart to budget
  - c. Common prices per impression or view

*Assignment for Week 6 (DUE November 3):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [5 of 8]
2. Create one thematic editorial calendar (shows messaging) and one time-based editorial calendar (shows frequency)
3. Continue reading *The Facebook Effect*, Chapters 13 to 14

## November 3 – Week 6 – Measurement & Tracking

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news) – class discussion
  - b. Campaign emails and social – What have we observed / class discussion
1. **Lecture:** Measuring results
  - a. How to look at a Google Analytics dashboard
  - b. UTM Codes & UTM tagging protocol
  - c. Quantcast Measurement dashboard
2. Online privacy and ad tracking
  - a. How does ad tracking really work
  - b. What are the issues with privacy
  - c. What is the next frontier in ad targeting / Apple vs. Facebook
  - d. What is a first party tracker or cookie and what is a third party or cookie
  - e. Tracking in a cookie-less world

*Assignment for Week 7 (DUE November 10):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [6 of 8]
2. FINISH reading **The Facebook Effect**, Chapters 15 to 17
3. UTM Tagging Protocol Assignment
4. Start putting together your final digital communications plan

## **November 10 – Week 7 – Planning and running a 360-degree campaign**

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news)
2. **Putting it all together:** How to write a digital communications plan
  - a. Strategy vs. tactics
  - b. Creative, messaging, and production
  - c. Budget examples
3. Questions on semester project
4. **Campaign Case Study:** Fighting the Soda Tax

*Assignment for Week 8 (DUE November 17):*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [7 of 8]
2. Continue drafting your final digital communications plan
3. Bring a laptop to class **next week** for Squarespace training. In advance, sign up for a free 30-day trial.

## **November 17 – Week 8 – Build a Squarespace Website in One Hour & Website Best Practices**

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Guest speaker:** TBD
2. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link
3. **Hands On:** How to create a Squarespace website in one day (Bring a laptop to class)
4. Website best practices
  - a. A look at some model websites
  - b. What makes an optimum landing page for conversions

*Assignment for Week 9 (DUE December 1)*

1. Submit a trending topic with at least 1 supporting link [8 of 8]
2. Finish your Squarespace website and submit link for review



3. Continue drafting your final digital communications plan

## November 24 – NO CLASS

## December 1 – Week 9 – Semester Project Overview

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class discussion:**
  - a. Discussion of election results / final discussion of email and social for campaigns
  - b. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news)
2. **Case Study:** Depending on student questions on topic most desired to cover
3. **Guest Speaker:** TBD
4. Walk through of what is due for semester project

*Assignment for Week 10 (DUE December 8):*

1. Continue working on semester project

## December 8 – Week 10 – Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

*Topic to be covered:*

1. **Class Discussion:**
  - a. Trending topic of the week (based on class submissions and/or news)
2. SEO best practices
  - a. Content and headline tips
  - b. Using Google Trends to guide your content and marketing strategy
3. SEM / Google AdWords campaigns
  - a. How to write a search ad
4. **Case Study:** Depending on student questions on topic most desired to cover
5. **Ask me anything**

*DUE Friday December 10 at NOON*

1. Final Semester Project Memo and 5-to-8-minute recorded video presentation

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