



M.P.S. in Political Management

PMGT 6452: Digital Strategy

3 Credits

Instructor Information

Instructor: Alex Dickinson

Alex Dickinson is Vice President and Chief of Staff at [Beekeeper Group](#), a digital public affairs agency based in Washington, D.C. Alex uses her background as a content and messaging strategist and digital advocacy tactician to build unique digital campaigns.

Alex received her master's degree from The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, and attended the University of Michigan for her undergraduate studies. She also teaches a course on Digital Public Relations Campaigns for George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202) 499-7049

Email Address: alexd@gwu.edu

Communication

My preferred means of contact is email and I strive to be as responsive as possible. For office hours outside of Tuesdays from 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm ET, or further meetings, please email me and we can arrange a time for a video conference or phone call. I will try to accommodate same day meetings, but cannot guarantee availability.

NOTE: This syllabus is accurate as of November 22, 2021 and will be updated with additional details.

Course Details

Course Description and Overview

This class aims to give you the skills to develop and implement a comprehensive digital strategy by employing the technology, tools and tactics appropriate for any political situation.

Course Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to...

1. Understand the history of digital mediums and social networks.
2. Identify current public policy, political, and public affairs issues and trends that impact the job of a digital strategist.
3. Apply the appropriate technology, strategy, advertising and/or organizing tactic to meet the needs of a specific client or issue campaign.
4. Develop a media plan for a political campaign, political committee, or issue campaign, including strategic use of technology and data, fundraising, online advertising, and organizing tactics.
5. Communicate ideas – visually, verbally, and in writing – in a concise, engaging, and confident manner.

Political Management Program Learning Objectives

These course objectives derive from the learning objectives of the Political Management program. Graduates of the program should possess a demonstrable capacity to:

1. Assess a political environment, develop an appropriate strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy.
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills and techniques for use in a political environment.
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate relevant empirical evidence to shape, optimize, and continuously inform the developed strategy.
4. Find, engage, and motivate the essential and appropriate leaders, professionals, and citizens to achieve the developed strategy.
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards in the profession and exhibits principled leadership

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.

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

Suzanne Farrand

Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

Required Text and Learning Materials

Students will need to purchase the following texts for this course:

- Delany, C. (2021). *How to Use the Internet to Change the World: and Win Elections*.
- Schenck, B. (2018). *The Digital Plan: Strategic Guidance and Planning to Win Political Campaigns, Grow Nonprofit Organizations, Launch Projects and Meet Goals*, 2nd Edition.

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard in the appropriate week folder. See the Course Schedule below for more information.

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

Supplemental texts will be made available on Blackboard.

Evaluation and Grading

This course will include the following types of assessment. Descriptions of each assessment can be found on Blackboard.

Assessments will contribute toward the student's grade based on the following chart:

Assignment Category	Weight
Discussions & Participation	30%
Assignments	30%
Final Campaign Plan	40%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Tentative Course Schedule

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. Final dates

and details will be found on the Blackboard course site.

Week	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Lessons	Assignments Due
1 <i>Week of 4/4/22</i>	Introduction & Defining Digital Campaigns	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 1.1: What is a Digital campaign? Lesson 1.2: Goals, Strategies, and Tactics	Discussion 1.1: Introductions Discussion 1.2: Current Campaign of Interest Assignment 1.1: Campaign selection and proposal memo
2 <i>Week of 4/11/22</i>	Understandi ng the Core Tools of Digital	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 2.1 Core tools of digital Lesson 2.2: Basic Principles of Digital Design	Discussion 2.1: CRM Review Assignment 2.1: Technology overview and campaign strategy/creative brief
3 <i>Week of 4/18/22</i>	Digital Messaging and Audience Identification	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 3.1: Who are you trying to reach? Lesson 3.2: Creating compelling digital messaging	Discussion 3.1: Digital Messaging Critique Assignment 3.1: Persona Guide and Audience Matrix
4 <i>Week of 4/25/22</i>	Building Websites	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 4.1: Understanding Campaign Websites & Website Planning Lesson 4.2: How to talk to your developers & analytics	Discussion 4.1: Current Campaign Website Critique Assignment 4.1: Wireframe and site map
5 <i>Week of 5/2/22</i>	Creating Compelling Content	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 5.1: Understanding how to select a platform & editorial planning Lesson 5.2: Maintaining an	Discussion 5.1: Current Social Media Content Critique Assignment 5.1: Editorial calendar and sample content

			engaging social media presence	
6 <i>Week of 5/9/22</i>	Digital Advertising Landscape – Programmatic and Display	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 6.1: Basics of Advertising Lesson 6.2: What is programmatic and display advertising?	Discussion 6.1: Current Digital Advertising Critique Assignment 6.1: Advertising strategy memo
7 <i>Week of 5/16/22</i>	Social Advertising & Search	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 7.1: Social media advertising Lesson 7.2: SEO & Search	Discussion 7.1: Current Campaign Video Critique Assignment 7.1: Sample advertising content
8 <i>Week of 5/23/22</i>	Email	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 8.1: What makes a good email? Lesson 8.2: Email execution (calendars, A/B testing, welcome campaigns, drip)	Discussion 8.1: Email Review Assignment 8.1: Email execution memo & draft email blast
9 <i>Week of 5/30/22</i>	Advanced Digital Advocacy Tactics	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 9.1: Advanced digital tactics Lesson 9.2: What goes into a digital strategy and campaign plan? (Recap)	Discussion 9.1: Funniest Campaign Tactic
10 <i>Week of 6/6/22</i>	Putting It All Together	<i>TBD</i>	Lesson 10.1: Basics of Consulting (budgets, retainers, RFPs & RFIs) Lesson 10.2: Putting it all together	Discussion 10.1: Share Campaign Plan Assignment 10.1: Final Campaign Plan & Recorded Presentation

Expectations and Responsibilities

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly throughout the semester to review weekly course content, view announcements, and submit assignments. Students can access the course site through [GWU Blackboard](#).

Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or the [IT Blackboard web page](#).

Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course closes.

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:

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

Technology Expectations

Regarding technology skills, you should be able to:

- 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.

Getting Started

Everything you need to get started in the course is contained within the Blackboard course site. You can use the menu links on the left side panel to view different components. The content for each learning unit is divided into folders—one for each week. More unit folders will unlock as weeks in the course progress.

Participation Policy

All students are expected to learn and contribute by being a positive participant in discussions, activities, presentations, and assignments. If you have an unavoidable conflict or become ill, in a way that will affect your participation in a given week, please notify your instructor immediately.

Communication & Feedback

Important announcements will be posted periodically via Blackboard’s announcement feature throughout the course. The instructor will strive to reply to student questions within 24 hours and provide feedback for assignments within a week after the due date.

Grading Scale

Following is the grade scale for all CPS classes:

Grade	Range	Grade 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	Good work, but needs reworking and more effort.
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.

Netiquette

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.

Credit Hour Policy

For this **10-week, 3-credit course** there will be an average of **10 hours** of combined direct instruction and independent learning per week. More information about GWU's credit hour policy can be found at [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page (Under: Assignment of Credit Hour Policy).

University Policies & Services

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is an integral part of the educational process, and GW takes these matters very seriously. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and in other ways outlined in the Code of Academic Integrity. Students accused of academic integrity violations should contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) to learn more about their rights and options in the process. Outcomes can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the university, including a transcript notation. For more information, please refer to the [Office of Academic Integrity website](#), email (rights@gwu.edu), or call (202-994-6757).

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.

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.

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).

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services. They can be contacted by phone at 202-994-8250 or in person at Rome Hall, 801 22nd Street, NW, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information visit the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

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.

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. 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 does offer 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](#)