

[PMGT6460 Syllabus]

# The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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

Spring 2022

January 10 – March 20, 2022

**Audience Research**

PMGT6460.10

3 Credits

Online

## **BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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### **Instructor**

Phillip Cory Brown

### **Contact Information**

Phone Number: (703) 347-5340

Email Address: [pcorybrown@gmail.com](mailto:pcorybrown@gmail.com)

### **Communication**

I prefer to consult with students in person or on the telephone as it is much more efficient than the oftentimes protracted and delayed discussions across email. I simply want to give you the best and quickest feedback possible so that you can maximize your educational experience. Telephone and face-to-face communication is much quicker than email for follow-up questions. Moreover, “live” communication helps me to perceive whether you understand my comments and answers to your questions so that I can immediately clarify any misunderstandings. I am available by email for questions that are simple and easy to answer, but for anything more involved and pressing, please call or see me in person. I will try to respond within 24 hours to inquiries submitted by email or telephone.

### **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).

### **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.

### **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/>.

### **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/>.

### **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 have to leave here, we will meet at **[fill in proximate location]** in order 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/>.

### **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 any/all of the following:

Dr. Todd Belt  
Director, Political Management Program  
[tbelt@gwu.edu](mailto:tbelt@gwu.edu) | 202-994-4363

## 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**

This course examines the research processes by which citizens consume political information and how it affects their decisions in politics. The class further examines the methods used by political researchers and how other campaign stakeholders utilize it to inform strategy along the various fronts of a political campaign. It will concentrate on developing an understanding of audience measurement techniques and standards for academic, commercial, and political applications. Measurement techniques to be learned will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

- Appropriately apply qualitative and quantitative research and describe their relationships to one another.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages with online and in-person data collection methodologies.

- Describe the methodology and design for both surveys and qualitative research.
- Apply micro targeting, data mining and modeling in decision making.
- Apply basic techniques for message development, message testing, ad testing (including dial tests), volume estimation, and product superiority testing.
- Use social media in qualitative and quantitative research, including sentiment analysis.
- Describe the origins and basic uses of ethnographic research.
- Apply basic moderating techniques for in-person and online qualitative methodologies.
- Interpret the results of qualitative and quantitative research.
- Describe ethical issues in audience research and measurement.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Evaluate 3rd party research.
- Explain when to use qualitative research vs. quantitative research.
- Create a questionnaire and an interviewer's/moderator's guide.
- Analyze polling data, qualitative data and summarize findings.
- Design and apply output from micro targeting, data mining, and modeling.

### **Course Requirements**

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. Effectively and responsibly work in groups with other students when required.
3. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.
4. 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.

### **Class Assignments Due Date and Submission**

Below is the course assignments calendar. Assignments are due by Sunday 11:59 PM ET in their respective weeks. To contribute to discussions and submit assignments please refer to the respective assignment pages in the course. Course weeks begin on Mondays and end on Sundays.

### **Evaluation and Grading**

These are the specific graded assignments below. Other assignments seen in the class Blackboard site contribute to the participation portion of the final grade as well as your overall learning in the course.

Assignment	Component	Weight
Individual Assignment 2.1	Find 10 Good Survey Questions, either ones you write or can find released publicly	5%
Individual Assignment 3.2	Develop 3 hypotheses that you would like to gather public opinion on concerning the 2020 Presidential Election cycle	5%
Individual Assignment 4.2	Develop a moderator’s guide	5%
Individual Assignment 5.2	Find an example of a public poll that has been released where it is evident, or mostly evident, that the results were meant to be persuasive rather than unbiased. Write a summary	5%
Individual Assignment 6.2	Find a relevant model that has been created concerning the 2020 Presidential cycle. Write a summary	5%
Individual Assignment 9.2	Find an instance in American political history of where public opinion could be used to advise a President. Be ready to discuss in class as your “Ted” style talk	25%
Group “Pitch” Project 9.1	The survey work done throughout the class will culminate in a “pitch” that the group will make to a 2020 candidate or campaign organization	40%
Participation		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

Donnelly, J.P. & Trochim, W.M. (2016). *Research Methods: The Essential Knowledge Base*. (2nd Edition). Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-8131530856

Bethlehem, J. (2017). *Understanding Public Opinion Polls*. (1st Edition). Taylor & Francis. ISBN-13: 9781498769747

Asher, H. (2017). *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*. (9th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press. ISBN-13: 9781506352428

### 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.

#### January 10, 2022

Week 1 Introduction

What Is Public Opinion?  
 Overview of research  
 How to be a Good Consumer of Polls  
 Giving Advice / Making Recommendations to Clients/Stakeholders

Readings: Polling and the Public (Ch 1)  
 Understanding Public Opinion Polls (Ch 2)

#### January 17, 2022

Week 2 Deeper Dive into Research Methods

Fundamentals of Research  
 Concepts, Language, Structure, Validity

Readings: Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 1)

Group Task: Meet your group during the week of May 27 - 31; Identify Objectives of Your Survey. Map out components of your survey with your group.

Individual Task 2.1: Find 10 Good Survey Questions, either ones you write or can find released publicly

**January 24, 2022**

Week 3 Basics of Survey Design

Elements of a Survey  
What Makes for a Good Question?

Readings: Polling and the Public (Ch 3)  
Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 7-8)  
Understanding Public Opinion Polls (Ch 3)

Group Task: Draft survey questions

Individual Task: Develop 3 hypotheses that you would like to gather public opinion on concerning the 2020 Presidential Election cycle

**January 31, 2022**

Week 4 Basics of Qualitative Research

Readings: Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 3)

Group Task: Present questions to class

Individual Task: Develop a moderator's guide

**February 7, 2022**

Week 5 Ethics in Research

Readings: Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 2)

Group Task: Finalize survey questions and submit by class time

Individual Task: Find an example of a public poll that has been released where it is evident, or mostly evident, that the results were meant to be persuasive rather than unbiased.

**February 14, 2022**

Week 6 Models: Choice and Information (Jason Sclar)

Readings: Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 12)  
Understanding Public Opinion Polls (Ch 10)

Group Task: Survey questions will field

Individual Task: Find a relevant model that has been created concerning the 2020 Presidential cycle and write a summary

**February 21, 2022**

Week 7 Research Case Study: PEORIA Project (Dr. Michael Cornfield)

Readings: Polling and the Public (Ch 9)  
Understanding Public Opinion Polls (Ch 8)

Group Task: Receive survey dataset and start to analysis

Individual Task: Background research on PEORIA Project  
(<https://gspm.gwu.edu/public-echoes-rhetoric-america-peoria-project>)

**February 28, 2022**

Week 8 Advising Clients / Stakeholders

Readings: Polling and the Public (Ch 6)  
Essential Knowledge Base (Ch 13)  
Understanding Public Opinion Polls (Ch 11)

Group Task: Submit topline memo of survey findings

Individual Task: Start prepping for your class “Ted Talk”

**March 7, 2022**

Week 9 Advising Leaders

Public Opinion and Leadership

Readings: Continue from Week 8

Group Task: Present a pitch deck for a potential client / stakeholder using your survey findings

Individual Task: Find an instance in American political history of where public opinion could be used to advise a President. Be ready to discuss in class as your “Ted” style talk.

**March 14, 2022**

Week 10 Group Presentations. The survey work done throughout the class will culminate in a “pitch” that the group will make to a 2020 candidate or campaign organization

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**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.*