

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Term

January 10, 2022 – March 20, 2022

Digital Advertising and Action

PMGT 6468

3 Credits

Office hours: Wednesday 8:00pm – 9:00pm

Class Location (Videoconference link if online)

Instructor Information

Instructor

Ryan Meerstein

Contact Information

Phone Number: (412)-302-2325

Email Address: rmeerstein@gwu.edu, rmeerstein@targetedvictory.com

Communication

Professor is available by email and you should expect a response within 24 hours at all times. If something is urgent, please use the professor's work email: rmeerstein@targetedvictory.com or cell phone number: 412-302-2325

Office hours will be available each week on Wednesday's from 8pm to 9pm. Additional meetings outside of those hours can be set up via email.

Course Details

How do you find the right people, educate them on your point of view, and effectively leverage their support? This course explores digital targeting, audience building, advertising and mobilization in detail. Students will be empowered by this course to run successful digital ad campaigns to educate and activate constituents while also getting exposure to the leading companies and practitioners in the world.

Expectations and Responsibilities

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

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation

For face-to-face classes:

Over the course of the semester, students will spend approximately three hours per week in combined online class meetings (synchronous learning) and engaged in asynchronous instructional learning activities (done weekly on one's own time) over the 10-week term. 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, 8¼ hours per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 30 hours in instructional time (asynchronous and synchronous) and 82.5 hours preparing for class for a total of 112.5 hours. Hybrid and Online courses meet the total 112.5 hours of total instruction.

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

It is expected that all content is consumed and all assignments are completed each week by Sunday evening. If a student is unable to complete their assignments they should contact Ryan Meerstein at rmeerstein@gwu.edu as soon as possible.

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. 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 | 202-994-4363

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

THE COURSE

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

How do you find the right people, educate them on your point of view, and effectively leverage their support? This course explores digital targeting, audience building, advertising and mobilization in detail. Students will be empowered by this course to run successful digital ad campaigns to educate and activate constituents while also getting exposure to the leading companies and practitioners in the world.

Classes will encourage active participation and will also leverage leading thought leaders from around the country, including experts from Google, Youtube, Politico, VoterVoice and more as well as digital practice leaders from both sides of the aisle.

Course Learning Objectives

Students in this course will learn how to identify and target their most important digital audiences, reach them with a wide variety of ads, and call them to awareness and action. At the conclusion of the course, students will be ready to:

1. Manage an effective digital ad campaign from initial concept to creative, and from targeting to measuring results.
2. Prepare, develop and launch a variety of digital ad types including search, social, display and video.
3. Manage a digital campaign that moves public targets through the continuum of engagement from paid contact through education and persuasion to meaningful action.
4. Have the necessary awareness to know if their campaign is succeeding or failing based on analytics and benchmarking.

Course Requirements

[Use this space to explain course requirements and expectations (e.g., Students are required to participate in two discussion board postings a week and respond to at least one posting from a peer; in addition they must... "]

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed [#]	Due Date	Weight
Assignments Weeks 1 – 8	Learning objectives stated in Blackboard and below	Each week by Sunday at 8pm	40%
Discussion Boards	Participation in 3 discussion boards throughout the semester	Discussion boards will be open for one week	10%
Final Project	Develop a detailed digital marketing plan and budget for hypothetical issue advocacy campaign	Last day of the semester	40%
General Participation and Timeliness	Student displays interest and curiosity in the subject and engages with class to learn more		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

[List required reading materials]

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

Week 1

Topic and Content Covered: Class overview, the rise and evolution of digital activation, the nuts and bolts of digital advertising

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should fully understand the goal of the class by the end of this lecture and should feel comfortable with the reading assignments and what will be covered in the following weeks.

Reading Due Today: N/A

Assignment(s) Due Today: N/A

Class Date

Week 2

Topic and Content Covered: Search and Social Marketing

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Class should understand how organizations are leveraging these platforms both organically and through paid media. They should start to understand the copy and creative that is necessary for this media and how to craft effective placements.

Reading Due Today: https://phone2action.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SOA_Corporate_2020.pdf

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment: After reading the above, identify a corporation that you believe runs a strong corporate advocacy program or has engaged in a corporate advocacy program in the last year. In 500 words or less, briefly explain the campaign and what you believe was effective about it.

Assignment: Identify an Association that has run an effective DIGITAL advocacy campaign at some point in the last two years. Use tools such as the Facebook and Google ad archives to identify digital advocacy campaigns. Once you have identified a campaign, in 500 words or less, explain the campaign what you believe was effective about it.

Class Date

Week 3

Topic and Content Covered: The growth and effectiveness of Civic Platforms

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should have general knowledge of the civic platform market, how it has grown and how it is leveraged by not only advocacy organizations but also private and public companies.=

Reading Due Today: <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/future-of-marketing/emerging-technology/2011-winning-zmot-ebook/>

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment 1:

- Find and screenshot an advocacy based search ad that you believe is effective and briefly explain why you believe it is effective.
- Find and screenshot an advocacy based search ad that you believe is ineffective and briefly explain why you believe it is ineffective.
- Find and screenshot an advocacy based Facebook ad that you believe is effective and briefly explain why you believe it is effective.
- Find and screenshot an advocacy based Facebook ad that you believe is ineffective and briefly explain why you believe it is ineffective.

Assignment 2: Visit the Human Rights Watch website and review their content and issues. Once you have reviewed the site, choose a specific issue they campaign for or against and draft search and

Facebooks ads. Use the templates found at the link below to draft your copy. Be sure to make a new version of the template for yourself, do not use the one at the link.

You will need to draft 3 sets of search ads and 3 Facebook ads.

Class Date

Week 4

Topic and Content Covered: Email Marketing and the Emergence of SMS

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should gain general knowledge of email and sms marketing programs as well as the content that organizations use to motivate someone to take an action. We will look at numerous real life examples and analyze what seems to be working and not working in this space.

Reading Due Today: https://fiscalnote-marketing.s3.amazonaws.com/AdvoBenchmark2021_v6.pdf?mtime=20210826145144

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment:

- Find an advocacy organization using a civic engagement platform, engage with the platform and in 500 words or less explain the user experience and what you thought worked well and what didn't work well. For what didn't work well, explain what you would have done differently.

Class Date

Week 5

Topic and Content Covered: Leveraging DC Media; The role of video and audio

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

This will be a two part class with the first session on DC media and their relationship with advocacy organizations. This session will have a heavy focus on newsletters. The second session will look at video and audio and how organizations use these mediums to motivate supporters to act.

Students should have a better understanding of the importance of niche media and the audiences they provide to advocacy organizations. Additionally, they should understand the many different ways that these organizations look to leverage video and audio to both communicate and relate to their supporters.

Reading Due Today: <https://thriveagency.com/news/how-to-build-an-email-marketing-strategy-in-2021/#Fundamentals>

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment:

- Visit the website for AARP and review their advocacy programs. After reviewing, draft two emails as if you were running digital advocacy for AARP. The topic/issue can be whatever you choose from the site. The calls to action should be as follows:
 - First email should be asking members of AARP to contact their member of Congress
 - Second email should be asking members of AARP to sign a petition

Class Date

Week 6

Topic and Content Covered: Defining Campaign Objectives: Awareness vs. Engagement

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should walk away from this class clearly understanding the difference between awareness and engagement campaigns and should be able to identify the goal of campaigns they see organizations actively running.

Reading Due Today: Have the newsletters you have subscribed to readily available to review

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment 1: Review the newsletters that you have now been subscribed to for the last two weeks and answer the following:

1. Have you seen any advertisers sponsoring more than one of the newsletters? If so, who?
2. Have you seen any advertisers sponsoring a newsletter multiple days in a row? If so, who?
3. Choose an advertiser that you have seen sponsor a newsletter more than once and give an analysis of their ad placement. Analysis should include:
 - Who the advertiser is
 - A description of their copy and creative
 - A description of the landing page associated with the ad
 - Why you believe this advertiser is buying this placement
 - Whether or not you believe the advertisement is effective and why

Assignment 2: Choose one of the Youtube channels below and review the channel. Choose one video that you find to be very effective and another that you find to be ineffective. In a paragraph or two describe why you believe one is effective and the other not.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheAmericanPetroleumInstitute>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/HumanRightsWatchOfficial>

Assignment 3: Watch the video below and write a one page memo as if you were the digital director of the National Restaurant Association and it was your responsibility to market that video. This plan should include a strategy and tactics for driving views of the full video as well as a plan for using segments of the video to drive additional digital engagement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF0gb3eny70>

Class Date

Week 7

Topic and Content Covered: Pulling it all together and defining the Campaign Mission

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should have a baseline understanding of each method discussed in this class allowing them to start moving beyond these tactics as silos and into building comprehensive plans.

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment 1: Visit the website of the United States Chamber of Commerce and review their content and issues. Once you have reviewed, choose one issue and complete the following:

Return to the ad copy builder from several classes ago and create a fresh document. Within this document, draft:

- 3 search ads with an awareness goal
- 3 search ads with an engagement goal
- 3 Facebook ads with awareness goal
- 3 Facebook ads with an engagement goal

Assignment 2: Returning to last weeks assignment, you are once again the digital director for the National Restaurant Association. Last week you worked through ways to market the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF0gb3eny70>

Redraft that assignment into a memo that outlines an awareness plan for driving users to a landing page where they will watch that video. Include details into the ad mediums you will use, the calls to action, a description of the ad creative and landing pages and how you will measure success. Describe in detail the audience you are attempting to make aware of this issue.

Class Date

Week 8

Topic and Content Covered: Building a Budget

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students should finish this class with an understanding of the cost structures of digital media in the advocacy space and how to plan based on those structures. Leveraging office hours for this class is highly recommended.

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Assignment 1: Visit the website of the National Manufacturers Association and review their content and issues. Once you have reviewed, choose one issue of current or recent importance to this organization and write a memo no longer than two pages in length that outlines a potential advocacy driven media plan. This memo should:

- Identify opportunities for Awareness and Engagement
- Define the mission of any Awareness or Engagement elements of the campaign
- Define audiences that should be targeted for Awareness and Engagement
- List the marketing tactics that will be used to execute this campaign
- Outline the goals that will lead to this campaign accomplishing its mission

Class Date

Week 9

Topic and Content Covered: Selling your plan through effective narrative and preparing for the final project

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

As a digital campaign operative, one of your most important roles is being able to sell a plan through to the principles of any organization or campaign. This class will begin with talking about the power of narrative and how a line itemed budget isn't enough. We must be able to tell the story of how our plan will drive change. This will seamlessly transition into outlining the final project and explaining any and all expectations around the final project.

Students should walk away from this class feeling prepared to start on their final project.

Assignment(s) Due Today:

The assignment is to use the template provided to develop a hypothetical budget. The scenario is that you are the Digital Director for the SEIU. You have been tasked with building out a quick run digital campaign that encourages voters to support the Biden Administration's Build Back Better Plan. You have 2 weeks to spend \$750,000 however you see fit. You have any and all creative available to you.

Attached here you will find the budgeting template and the pricing sheet

Draft a budget using the pricing sheet and the template. Once you have completed the budget, draft 6 to 10 bullet points that highlights what you believe are the top features of the budget that would be important to know.

Class Date

Week 10

Topic and Content Covered: A look ahead

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Description: This class should be low stress and enjoyable. Students will hear from experts on where they believe this field is headed and what strategies and technologies will change the playing field in the years to come.

After being in the weeds for 9 straight weeks, the goal here is take a step back and look at the big picture of marketing and advocacy.

Assignment(s) Due Today:

The final project was assigned during the previous week. The final project is a two part assignment that includes interaction with myself in order to complete phase two of the project.

Each student will be provided with an organization, issue set and budget specific to them. Once they receive this assignment, they have 24 hours to turn around a one page memo outline an argument for additional budget. This argument should be very specific to some need the campaign cannot fulfill without these additional funds. This is not optional, all students must make the budget request.

I will respond back to each student within 24 hours with their final budget. Once that budget is received, students are to complete a comprehensive campaign plan and budget. All details of this plan should be within one Word/PDF document.

It is suggested that all students leverage office hours while completing this project.

The final project is due on the last day of the semester.