

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**M.P.S. in Political Management
Spring I, 2021**

Washington Residency

PMGT 6480

3 Credits

Online (10 weeks)

In-person Residency (1 week)

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Contact Information

Matthew Dallek (202) 302-1794

Email: mdallek@gwu.edu

Communication

The best way to reach me is through email. You can expect a response within 24 hours, but often within a matter of minutes, depending on schedules. You can also make an appointment to meet with me outside of webex office hours.

Webex Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 8:15-9:15pm

You are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions, especially in the first two weeks. They are not required, and the meetings will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard for you to view if you are unable to attend live.

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](#).

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

Attendance during the week-long residency is mandatory. Any individual unable attend a residency meeting should email Matt Dallek prior to the beginning of that meeting. If you are not feeling well, please email the instructor and stay home. *Repeated, unexcused absences will be considered in your final grade.*

Attendance at WebEx office hours is strongly encouraged, but optional.

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).

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:

- Create documents and presentation slides
- 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 GYPD 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

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.

Note: Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the residency week, which can create unnecessary distractions. Laptops are permitted only for the purposes of note-taking.

Political Management Program Objectives

1. Assess a political environment, develop a strategy to achieve specified goals within that environment, and act to carry out that strategy through a campaign.
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills.
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize a campaign.
4. Find, engage, and motivate the right people – leaders, professional colleagues, and citizens – to join and contribute to a campaign.
5. Address the recurring dilemmas of political life in a manner that upholds ethical standards as they practice the profession.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Washington, DC, residency course for capstone students combines ten weeks of online instruction with an intensive one-week residency in the nation's capital, in which students will have frank conversations with leading professionals. The course is designed to help capstone students in the online Political Management program learn about Washington's institutions and culture, navigate the city's politics, and use in-depth research to help a client on an issue essential to the client's mission. Students should acquire the tools needed to engage in successful electoral and advocacy campaigns and strategic public affairs.

This course also offers an 'insider's view' of the struggle to shape politics, strategy, and policy, giving students the chance to develop their own capstone research project to achieve their professional objectives. Students will come to understand the federal political ecosystem, meet fellow GSPM students, faculty, and alumni, and develop a robust political network that can be tapped after they graduate. Drawing on conversations with Washington officials, relevant readings, and their own empirical research, the course should make students more effective tacticians, strategists, politicians, and advocates. Students will craft a 5,000-word campaign plan based on original research that should serve as a key part of their GSPM portfolio and help them find jobs in their chosen fields.

Note: During the week-long residency in Washington, DC, students will be expected to engage in a candid exchange of ideas and views with former members of Congress, political strategists, reporters, PR specialists, and lobbyists among others. Students will also have time to discuss their capstone projects with their peers and professor. **THE RESIDENCY IS REQUIRED OF ALL STUDENTS.**

Learning Objectives

After participating in this course, you will be able to:

1. Finish a capstone research project that is applicable to students' careers.
2. Advocate and communicate effectively in Washington.
3. Through an exchange of ideas with business, communications, media, diplomatic, and political professionals, acquire first-hand knowledge of how to make Washington "work" for you and your clients.

4. Describe the role of political advisers in shaping policy.
5. Grasp the concepts, skills, methods and standards of conduct that political managers use in various settings in the capital; develop campaign research, strategies and messages to help elected leaders make hard decisions.
6. Conduct, evaluate, and integrate research in shaping and optimizing a political campaign.
7. Find, engage, and motivate the right people—leaders, colleagues, and citizens—to lead effectively on critical national issues.

Required Materials

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G.G. (2016). *The craft of research* (4th Ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226239569.

Required Assignments

Assignment	Prompt	Due Date	Weight
Prospectus (1st Draft)	<i>See Syllabus for details</i>	By 11:59pm, Jan. 16	Not Graded
Prospectus (Revised)	<i>See Syllabus</i>	11:59, Jan. 26	10%
Draft Introduction	<i>See Syllabus</i>	11:59pm, Feb. 13	10%
Draft Section (3-5 pages)	<i>See Syllabus</i>	11:59pm, Feb. 24	10%
Final Report	<i>See syllabus</i>	11:59pm, March 17	55%

PARTICIPATION (includes residency-week comments and questions, all Blackboard exercises, and attendance)	<i>See Syllabus</i>		15%
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.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to alter the course content and/or adjust the syllabus to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. The instructor will let students know of any changes as soon as possible.

[Capstone Research Project Guidelines](#)

January 10: Drafting the Capstone Prospectus

Weekly Goals

- Introduction.
- Review overall course goals.
- Begin the process of research.
- Discuss ideas for your capstone project with your peers.

Learning Objectives

After completing this week, you should be able to:

1. Begin to use three basic tools: research, strategy memos, and message/narratives.

Readings

- Booth, W., & Colomb, G. (2016). Chapters 1-6. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- (Optional, but strongly recommended: Read two of the sample student capstone papers).

Capstone Sample Documents

- [Capstone Sample # 1 \(PDF\)](#).
- [Capstone Sample # 2 \(PDF\)](#).
- [Capstone Sample # 3 \(PDF\)](#).
- [Capstone Sample # 4A \(PDF\)](#).
- [Capstone Sample # 4B \(PPT\)](#).

- [Capstone Sample # 5A \(PDF\)](#).
- [Capstone Sample # 5B \(PDF\)](#).

Discussion 1.1: Introductions

Value: Ungraded

Initial Response: due Day 3

Two Peer Responses: due Day 5

Introduce yourself to your fellow students (where you work, professional interests, relevant hobbies, and what you most hope to learn during your week-long stay in Washington).

In no more than one paragraph, describe your working ideas for your capstone project. Be sure to include the major question that you are seeking to address in your project as well as your tentative argument/thesis, to the extent that it is formulated.

Post your initial response by the end of Day 3.

Post responses to at least two (2) of your peers' ideas for their projects by Day 5.

When making the posts to your peers please consider the following:

- Provide them with at least one to two paragraphs of constructive, thoughtful feedback about their proposals.
- Are there sources they might want to consult?
- Arguments they should consider? Issues and angles that might be useful for them to explore?

ASSIGNMENT: FIRST DRAFT OF PROSPECTUS

DUE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

Value: UNGRADED

Length: 500 words

Your prospectus should run approximately 500 words, excluding bibliographic citations and other appendices. It should lay out what you plan to do in your research, how you plan to do it, and why the results will matter to your client.

In putting your prospectus together, build on your political interests and strengths: persons, groups, and issues that you care about; courses you've enjoyed and where you've excelled; and politically relevant organizations that you are curious about. Remember, as you conduct your preliminary research, the availability of evidence will become an important consideration; no matter how appealing an aspect of the project may seem to you, if you cannot procure and process it in ten weeks, then it will not be worth pursuing.

Here is a checklist you can use as a way to assess the viability of your project, while keeping your mock client and other key players in mind. Fill columns with checks if you can put together:

- A record of the potential client's biggest successes and failures.
- A profile describing the client's modus operandi (how they go about their business).
- Evidence about the client's relationships with the other political actors/stakeholders.
- Position statements on the issue at the heart of your campaign.
- A mission statement about the client's core values and goals.
- Names of people inside and outside the organization you might be able to interview.

If you cannot find plentiful information in response to the prompts above, then adjust your project accordingly. That may entail switching mock clients. These prompts and your responses are intended for your personal use, but please append them to your prospectus if you think it will help me see what you are planning to do in your research.

There are four components to a successful prospectus:

1. **Research Questions and Rationale:** *State the question that your report seeks to answer, and try to make the question as specific as possible (include the name of your client in the question).* Explain why this question is important to the client. Why does it matter to the organization or individual or the cause you've picked?
2. **Campaign Context:** Explain how an answer to the question will help your client achieve a goal that advances the client's organizational, moral, and/or

ideological mission (as verified on its web site or through other official sources). The prospectus should describe the client's mission and goals, and put them into the context of the political situation you plan to investigate. What conflict will be resolved through a successful campaign? Who are your most likely campaign supporters, opponents, and third-parties that can validate your campaign's standing and credibility? Who will decide the outcome of this conflict and how? What internal and external factors will affect the outcome?

3. Literature Review: The appendix to this memo on Library Research Recommendations for GSPM will help you review the literature toward this purpose: identify no more than four published works (articles, books, or other documents) that bear on your research question and campaign context, and briefly explain their relevance to your capstone project. These will be referred to as your core documents.

Ideally, these core documents will not only provide crucial information but also disagree in such a way as to help you set up your argument as follows: X1 and X2 say— and/or their evidence suggests A and B—that the client should do this, whereas Y indicates the client should do that, my research will resolve the dispute with actionable intelligence, based on original research.

Your capacity to frame and then resolve a choice of options strongly attests to your value as a research-driven political professional.

4. Proposed Sources and Methods: Discuss how you intend to go about answering your research question in view of the campaign context and literature review by describing a research method, the sources you plan to investigate, how they will shed light on your question, and how desired interview subjects will be useful to your project.

Your primary research will start with your core documents culled from your literature review. It will conclude with answers from your expert interviews, persons you judge likely to be able to fill in knowledge gaps (see the tips on interviewing ahead).

Some previous Capstone projects have enjoyed success by:

- Studying accounts of and messaging from a similar campaign from the past or in another venue. This entails "analogical research."
- Analyzing attributes of political publications, internal documents, and other message "content."
- Examining audience research and performing rudimentary audience research in miniature.
- Conducting player research into the political strengths and weaknesses of key players, including your principal, likely opponents, founders, and other decision-makers.

Although you should not get bogged down in policy research, there are situations where it becomes necessary to specify policy options and components in order to meet the political needs of your campaign. Such as:

- **Analogical Research:** comparisons with other campaigns often generate insights, especially if they have been well researched and written about (your literature review will clue you in to this). By all means, make use of comparable situations—aka “cases”—to the one your campaign will operate within; just be sure to take differences and unknowns into account as well as the similarities—be mindful, as well, that the mere mention of some analogies may set off emotional tripwires in your readers’ heads. That can be a good or bad thing, depending on what point you're making. Useful for development of organizational models, procedural steps, public argument, and debate. Along with your literature review, expert interviews will help you sharpen your analogical cases.
- **Content Analysis:** if messaging is the heart of your project, then you may decide to examine a collection of texts, press clips, hearing transcripts, social media comments, speeches—by breaking them into parts (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs), coding each part according to certain characteristics (date, author, publication, frequency, valence*), and then examining the statistical patterns. Computer-aided content analysis can range from a simple “word cloud” (wordle.com) to elaborate lexical processes; you can also conduct it by hand and eye with a colleague to cross-check your coding choices. Trends, biases, and conflicts may be discerned through content

analysis.

* Valence means positive, negative, or neutral sentiment.

- Audience Research: While you may understandably want to conduct survey research, bear in mind the high cost associated with rigorous polling. Online polling (e.g. via Survey Monkey) is not a good substitute unless you have robust response levels from a well-defined target population; the self-selected responses most online polls generate can be quite misleading when generalized. As substitutes for polling, you can assemble a makeshift focus group, and compare responses to a message administered to a treatment group with those of a control group exposed to the message. You may also make use of public poll data as secondary sources; better still, we will credit you for constructing a good battery of poll questions even if you cannot take it into the field.

Whatever you do in the area of audience research, bear in mind that soliciting and analyzing the opinions of people regarding key words, players, and proposals in your campaign space will only be valuable to the extent you (or those whom you cite) construct appropriate tests and obtain appropriate population samples. Be sure to describe your audience research methods fully and acknowledge their limits.

- Player Research: Some of the players pertinent to your project will be individuals, and as we all know, individuals have records. Of particular interest to political campaigns are their occupational history, time in current office, how safe they are in their current post, key votes, major financial contributors (or contributions), signature issues and achievements, associates, and political style (as evidenced in videos as well as journalistic accounts). Organizations are also "players," with similar dossier data along with lines of authority, resource assets, and their own histories. Knowledge of players is essential to strategic engagement plans, agendas, and messages. Your Capstone project may entail a sequence of meetings with individual players and organizational representatives.
- Policy Research: There well may be an extensive and dense policy literature of use to you. In working your way into and through it, it would be of benefit to read the classic book on the rhetoric (messaging) of policy-making, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, by Deborah Stone. It is a long book and written from a left of center perspective, but it

contains much of value to political professionals of all ideological points of view. Every policy white paper, no matter how dry and seemingly objective, espouses a political position, and this book helps you spot it behind the numbers, symbols, rules, and even facts (those words are chapter titles). In brief, this book may be useful to those of you who are performing political analysis of policy options.

At a simpler level, it often pays to plot the positions on policy issues of your major players in order to spot areas for consensus and confrontation.

January 17: Revise the Prospectus

Weekly Goals

- Begin to conduct research on the capstone project.
- Begin to revise the prospectus based on feedback from the professor.
- Identify the biggest holes in your argument and research.
- If desired, email your instructor with any questions about the status of your capstone project—how to incorporate your interviews into the paper, how to flesh out your argument, what evidence you should use, and so on.

Learning Objectives

After completing this week, you should be closer to having a specific, focused research question and a better grasp on how to conduct research and provide your client with an answer.

Readings

- Booth, W., & Colomb, G. (2016). Chapters 7-10. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the value of research as a campaign tool.
2. Appreciate the importance of campaign research, strategy, and message, so as to explain how leaders approach decision-making.

3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize a campaign.

JANUARY 24: REVISED PROSPECTUS

Weekly Goals

- Refine and finalize your prospectus, including your specific research question.
- Continue to conduct research and test your hypothesis.
- Submit your revised prospectus.
- Identify the biggest holes in your argument and research.
- Begin filling in those holes.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the value of research as a campaign tool.
2. Appreciate the importance of campaign research, strategy, and message, so as to explain how leaders approach decision-making.
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize a campaign.

Readings

None

Assignment 2: Revised Prospectus

Value: 10% of Grade

Length: 500 words

DUE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26

JANUARY 31: RESEARCH

Weekly Goals

Ask the professor any questions as you dive into your research.

Use the professor's feedback on the prospectus to shape your research.

Research as much as possible.

No Assignment or Readings due

FEBRUARY 7: DRAFT AN INTRODUCTION

Weekly Goals

Continue to conduct research. By the end of this week, much of your research should be completed.

Draft a 1- to 2-page introduction. The introduction will be rough, but it's important to put something down on paper.

The introduction should include your research question, a brief (working) thesis/argument, and clearly identify the client, the problem you're trying to help the client solve, and why the client should care about the answers your paper will provide.

Due: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Value: 10 percent

FEBRUARY 14: WRITING THE REPORT

Weekly Goals

Write as much as you can. You should be getting hundreds of words on paper, even if they are rough.

Incorporate feedback from the professor on your draft introduction.

Revise the introduction

No assignments due.

FEBRUARY 21: DRAFT A SECTION

Weekly Goals

Draft a 3- to 5-page section of your report—it can cover any portion of the report, including the political context, the main argument, the recommendations, etc., etc. You should draft the section that you think would be most useful to you at this stage in the research and writing process. The instructor will provide you with feedback, which should help you sharpen your arguments.

Assignment due: 3- to 5-page draft section of the report.

DUE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

VALUE: 10 percent

FEBRUARY 28: WRITING

Weekly Goals

- Complete a draft of at least three-quarters of the entire paper.
- Work on the structure of the report.
- Consult the professor on any outstanding questions on the report.
- Share your project with colleagues for feedback, if desired.
- Refine the strategies and arguments behind your campaign.

Learning Objectives

After completing this week, you should be able to:

1. Describe the value of research as a campaign tool.
2. Appreciate the importance of campaign research, strategy, and message, so as to explain how leaders approach decision-making.
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize a campaign.

No Assignment due

MARCH 7: REVISING

Weekly Goals

Revise and polish your final report.

No assignment due

MARCH 14: FINISH CAPSTONE PAPER

Value: 55 percent

Length: 5,000 words

DUE: THURSDAY, MARCH 17

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES:

Your research report should be roughly 5000 words in length. It should make the case for a set of recommended messages and engagement steps for your client to take in the campaign under consideration. Make sure the final report includes the following elements:

1. **Argument/Thesis**

Your argument constitutes the spine of your work. Whatever you recommend your client should do must flow logically from your claim as to why that action will benefit your client and advance your client's goals given the situation at hand. Your argument must be backed by evidence, supported by reasons, qualified by contingencies, and ultimately made clear by a strong thesis statement, or that charts a course of action and frames the entire research project.

For example: suppose you recommend that a candidate for a state legislative seat adopt tax reform as her signature issue. The recommendation will be more persuasive to that candidate's campaign team (your mock client) to the extent that you embed it in an argument that a winnable majority of voters in that district cares a lot about tax reform and that the candidate can gain a competitive advantage by speaking to that majority. The argument, in turn, must be bolstered by evidence which bears out the thesis that tax reform candidates in similar situations have gained support from voting groups similar to those sought in this case, and a companion thesis that the candidate's political background, resumé, and experiences equip her to

speak more credibly on this issue than her opponent.

When you can state your argument and thesis clearly in one sentence (or in a single paragraph), you have neared the end of your project. In your report, it may take the form of a compound sentence addressed to the mock client: “I think you should do this, because it will result in the following benefits, based on what my research tells us about this part of the world.”

Note that you do not have to formulate and test hypotheses, as in science and social science, whereby confirmation or disconfirmation supplies the core of the argument. Applied politics is too messy, with multiple causes and effects, for hypothesis testing, even if you had the skills, budget, and time to test hypotheses rigorously, which you do not. Instead, you just have to make your best argument.

2. Situational Description

Your situational description ideally expands on the campaign context you sketched in the prospectus. A good accounting of the environment in which the client will campaign includes: the issues under debate; the views of the voters or decision-makers; the decision-making venues and the applicable rules and relevant processes; the allies, competitors, and influential third-parties whose voices will be heard along with yours. You should describe, if appropriate, the actors and factors that will inform your presentation of the main options available to the campaign. This section will also introduce those aspects of the environment lending themselves to the research and analysis you have conducted. The situational description often takes the form of a chronological narrative. You may find it prudent to pause to summarize a debate, perhaps structured by your core published sources, at the decision crossroads where your recommendation applies. Try to delineate the main items of contention and note the important players on each side of such a debate. Note that each side may use different terms to characterize the situation; for example, in debates over government services, referring to them as “entitlements” or “the safety net” imply conflicting meanings. It is impressive when you can isolate those terms, tie them to the perspectives they exhibit, and perform content analysis on how often and in

what contexts they appear in public discourse. Don't get bogged down in this section. Provide just enough background and context to make your argument clear and convincing.

3. Research Results

Research results attest to the accuracy of your thesis. They consist of the data and cases you have compiled, combined with the work of other researchers. Don't be discouraged by negative results. Evidence which runs counter to your original thesis means that you should tweak or even flip it, and recommend a different option. Although you may spend lot of time on your research, the results need not occupy a corresponding length of your report and slide deck. Again, provide just enough to drive home your argument. This is what I did, methodologically speaking, and this is what I found, based on my research.

4. Political Analysis

You've set the stage and investigated, you've reported on your findings; now tell us what you've learned that is of use to the campaign. What are the implications of your thesis for the problem at the center of your research? Break these forces down into their components and speculate on how they will behave in relation to the actions you are laying out as options for your client. Political forces consist of "factors", such as economic and social goods, institutional processes, and legal limitations, on the one hand, and living, breathing, thinking, culturally conforming and/or non-conforming "actors" from individual authorities to electoral populations, on the other. (You do not have to group your analytic components as factors and actors; that's just a rhetorical flourish I'm using in these guidelines.) The more incisive your analysis, the more persuasive your argument will be, and the more your campaign recommendations will seem right to the reader.

One analytic framework treats politics as a game conducive to move-by-move examination: if we do X1, voters will likely do Y1, and our opponent Z1; this approach can be extended into a round 2. Another approach, familiar to anyone who has worked in business, breaks down components/forces by the "SWOT" method: Strengths, Weaknesses,

Opportunities, and Threats. Whatever framework you choose, be consistent and systematic in its application.

5. Campaign Recommendations

Each of your recommendations should describe a step the client can be reasonably expected to take as part of an appropriate campaign.

“Reasonably” means the designated person, group, or organization possesses the resources necessary to execute the step, and that the move conforms with moves the client has taken in the past. In brief, your recommendations should be realistic. Each recommendation should be based on a strategic, rationale, and concrete pieces of evidence. As a whole, the recommendations should be succinct and vivid enough to be memorably summarized at the opening of your report.

Generally, three to four recommendations will suffice. A dozen or more recommendations indicates that you have not established priorities and thought adequately about timing and sequencing of campaign moves. For this project, there is no need to write a complete campaign plan as you may have in other courses.

One way to organize your recommendations, from research to writing and presentation, is to pose them as either changes the client should adopt or protections of the status quo the client should embrace. Changes to the status quo, also known as reforms, are often justified by a combination of the following reasons: research in comparable situations has shown they yielded better results, they are easy for campaign teams to comprehend and implement, they can be tried at low risk and little cost, they better reflect the core values of the client.

6. Message Development (Content & Delivery)

Your report and presentation should feature an example of at least one of your recommendations which illustrates your argument and thesis; the reader should be able to sense how and why a sample message would work as you have envisioned it. Spell out who is meant to deliver the message to which audience(s), when, in what kinds of media settings and formats. Ideally, you

might provide samples of a speech, tweets, a press release, and other elements from the message campaign.

If message development is a major part of your report, then I would be interested in seeing you develop several versions of a strategically sound message. The versions could vary by length of time: from a three-second subject header to a thirty-second executive summary and/or ad spot, and on to a longer efforts in persuasion, mobilization, and reinforcement. Alternately, they could vary by audience depending on which groups you are targeting.

Specificity matters. Such multiple-versioned messages should be accompanied by details regarding its delivery—i.e. paid advertising placements, earned media negotiations with the press, and peer-to-peer inducements for social media voices and face-to-face canvassers and surrogates. Your report should name the reporters, community leaders, and others that influence actors to be engaged.

7. Grammar, Spelling, And Voice

Yes, it matters. Wiens, K. [I Won't Hire People Who Use Poor Grammar. Here's Why.](#) Harvard Business Review. July 29, 2012.

Any client will want to be presented with a polished, error-free report. Correct spelling shows attention to detail, a crucial attribute of a valued adviser or employee. It also conveys a respect for readers, especially those being named in a report or presentation. If you misspell the name of your client or a key contact even once in your report, you will be zeroed out on this grading criterion.

As for grammar: Misplaced commas, sentence fragments, and poorly arranged phrases often impede reader comprehension. Conversely, reliance on the active voice—sentences in which noun, verb, and object appear in that order—forces you to assign responsibility for campaign actions and leads to vigorous prose. To cite a classic example of the passive voice—

object, verb, noun optional—the sentence “Mistakes were made” doesn’t inform the reader who made them. Occasionally, it behooves a political adviser to resort to such an evasive sentence structure. More often, it does not.

“Voice” refers to the tone of voice you want to use with your client (and not the voice of your recommended messengers as they carry out recommendations). Be crisp, confident, and enthusiastic. Read your drafts aloud and you’ll see how close your tone comes to resembling that of a professional whom you admire.

MARCH 21-MARCH 25: WASHINGTON RESIDENCY

(Consult itinerary for details)

YOU MUST ATTEND THE ENTIRE WEEK-LONG RESIDENCY IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE COURSE

Weekly Goals

- Explain and analyze how complex Washington institutions work and affect public policy.
- Describe how tools within political management, advocacy, and public affairs can be utilized to shape politics, policy, and decision making within the halls of power.
- Conduct independent research and interviews to deepen your knowledge of your capstone subject.
- Participate in simulations and meetings to sharpen political skills necessary to succeed in Washington and advance your capstone research agenda.

Learning Objectives

After completing this week, you should be able to:

1. Become familiar with the essential Washington institutions and how they interact to impact public policy and public opinion.
2. Explain how non-governmental institutions affect policy outcomes.
3. Describe what is meant by ‘influence’ and how it can be achieved.

4. Determine the elements necessary to have a working democracy.
5. Ascertain the uses and limits of government among the three branches of the federal government, interest groups, and the media.

Readings (Optional)

Before arriving in Washington:

- Eilperin, Juliet "[If You're a Self-Loathing Journalist, You're Doing it Wrong](#)," The Washington Post, Dec. 20, 2013.
- Frost, Martin and Davis, Tom. [The Partisan Divide: Crisis in Congress](#). October 27, 2015
- Mann, Thomas E., [Politics is More Broken Than Ever—Political Scientists Need to Admit It](#), The Atlantic. May 26, 2014.
- Schott, Ben and Leibovich, Mark. [Washington Words, A glossary of 'Inside the Beltway' vocabulary](#). The New York Times, Sept. 6, 2013.

ASSIGNMENT: PARTICIPATION

All students are expected to attend every meeting, ask questions of guests, and engage in robust participation during the residency week.

Value: 15 percent