M.P.S. in Political Management
Summer
2018

Capstone: Political Power & Practice
6495.10
3 Credits

Mondays, 7:10 PM - 9:40 PM
1776 G Street, NW, C-112
May 21, 2018 – July 23, 2018

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Michael D. Cohen, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor and Interim Director of the Political Management Program at the Graduate School of Political Management. Dr. Cohen’s research focuses on political communication and technology. He is the Editor of The ECHO and Chief Data Scientist of the PEORIA Project. Outside of GSPM, Dr. Cohen has over 20 years of experience leading political, public, and private-sector research and technology efforts as the Founder and CEO of Cohen Research Group, a polling and market research firm in Washington, D.C. The group publishes Congress in Your Pocket, the first-to-market and award-winning suite of political directories for mobile devices. Previously, he served as Principal Strategist and Polling Team Lead at Microsoft, Vice President of Public Affairs at Fabrizio, McLaughlin and Associates, and Senior Research Director at The Gallup Organization. He is a three-time graduate of the University of Florida (B.S. Telecommunication 1992, M.A. Mass Communication and a Graduate Certificate in Political Campaigning, 1993, Ph.D. Political Science, 1996) and a member of its leadership Hall of Fame. He lives with his wife and two children in Northern Virginia.

Contact Information
Dr. Cohen’s Mobile Number: 703-785-9094
Email Address: michaeldcohen@gwu.edu

Communication
Please contact me by e-mail. I will respond within 24 hours to all student e-mails. I am available to meet for appointments (e-mail to schedule) during the week.

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.
**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.

**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/.

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

**Attendance Policy**
Attending class is required. Should you find yourself with a scheduling conflict, please contact me as soon as you are aware of the issue to let me know that you will absent, otherwise, it will be considered an unexcused absence and it will negatively count against your participation grade. Simply put, you must attend class to participate. **Three or more class absences during the spring semester (1/5 of the classes) will result in a failing class participation grade.**

**Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation**
Over the course of the semester, students will spend at least 2 hours (100 minutes) per week in class. Required reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 7 hours (350 minutes) per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 25 hours in instructional time and 87.5 hours preparing for class.
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 either/both of the following:

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu  |  202-994-3592

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

Political Management Program Objectives

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

Course Description and Overview

This capstone seminar has been designed to enhance your ability to develop and integrate knowledge of political strategies, tactics, and situations, and apply that knowledge to advanced political problems.

To achieve these aims, you will be asked to conceive and execute an advocacy or electoral "campaign-relevant" research report and slide presentation for a mock political client that you select. As you complete this project, you will draw upon concepts and skills you have learned during your coursework, add important people to your professional network, and produce deliverables for your career portfolio.

In addition to this semester-long research project, you will be asked to engage with assigned readings and produce shorter memo-based assignments designed to help you reflect on: (a) your leadership capacities and (b) your career (opportunities, aspirations, and place) in politics.

More generally, this course has been designed to teach you what Aristotle thought were the keys to being a successful political leader: discernment and prudence. Knowing what questions to ask, what research to pursue, and what actions to recommend at any one time are marks of prudential leader.

Course topics include: leadership, gaining and wielding power, positioning and posturing regarding the rules, conflict resolution, negotiating and bargaining skills, grappling with the consequences of winning and losing. As historian H.W. Brands (Andrew Jackson, p. 371) adeptly explained:

"In politics perhaps more than in most other arenas of human endeavor, interests and convictions tend to coincide. Whether convictions produce interests, or interests produce convictions, differs from person to person. But whatever their genesis, convictions and interests almost invariably end up pointing in the same direction. Those who can’t master the coincidence don’t succeed in politics, and they leave the game to those who can."
Course Learning Objectives
By the end of the course, the students will;

1. **Understand how time and context structure (provide opportunities and impose constraints) on political strategy.** Learn to perceive and account for strategically those factors under one's control and gain an appreciation for heresthetics, which William Riker defines as the direct manipulation of the political structure to win a specific outcome. Delve into the nature of power and learn about the methods for effectively acquiring as well as wielding it. Weigh the ethical and moral considerations related to manipulating public sentiments and political outcomes.

2. **Be able to align strategy and tactics through time to achieve long-term goals** – Successful political leaders work relentlessly and adapt continuously to be sure to accomplish this. They are not simply "lucky" and it is important to understand how much effort and calculation goes into realizing individual success. As Rexford Tugwell incisively noted regarding those who attained the office of president, “The reluctant seldom succeed. One thing is sure. Active ambition began at an earlier time than has usually been supposed, in some cases much earlier.” Thus, it is important to learn how to perceive and exploit the longer-term political opportunities which exist in the American political system.

3. **Discover by doing how disciplined, systematic, and largely self-conducted research can help political clients to construct strategies and tactics to win a campaign (electoral or advocacy)** - Alongside this knowledge, you will develop your proficiency to create written and visual deliverables that communicate research results effectively to a political client. In short, you will learn what it takes to produce high-quality, portfolio-worthy deliverables.

4. **Become more analytical, strategic, and professional regarding your passion for partisan politics and advocacy issues** - This class is designed to help you become better at sizing up situations, plotting strategies, aligning and executing tactics, grappling with setbacks and not becoming too impressed by your own achievements, negotiating favorable terms, reducing (and when necessary instigating) conflict to achieve your aims. In short, you will develop the political skills to become a professional in the field of political management.
Course Requirements
Bolded items are those related to your semester-long individual research project.

(1) Political Purpose/Mission Statement - Due Week 1 – May 21 - 5% of grade
(2) Pre-class/Blackboard Reflections - Due before two Class Sessions, 5 pts. each - 10% of grade
(3) Project Prospectus - Due Week 4 – June 18 - 10% of grade
(4) Research Findings Summary - Due Week 7 – March 19 - 15% of grade
(5) Final Report - Due Week 11 – April 16- 30% of grade
(6) Client Slide Deck - Due Week 12 – April 23 - 10% of grade
(7) Presentation of Client Research - Due Weeks 12 & 13 – April 23 & April 30 - 5% of grade
(8) Class participation - Includes active involvement in the case study/simulations in class, peer review activities & grading other students' final presentation - 15% of grade

Evaluation and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description and Learning Objective(s)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Purpose Statement</td>
<td>Write a no more than ten-word mission statement that distills who you are: your political beliefs, value commitments, and personal history. Why did you pursue a degree in political management and what in our political system to you hope to change, sustain, or bolster during your career? What is your long-term goal? Submit your ten-word mission statement via Blackboard. For an example, here’s mine (it encapsulates my beliefs and my work): &quot;Bridging political science and practical politics through education and experience.&quot; (LO: 1, 2, 4)</td>
<td>Week 1 May 21 (before class by 5pm)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Pre-Class/Blackboard Reading Reflections</td>
<td>Prior to 2 different class sessions, you will be asked a series of questions on the readings. You will be expected to respond concisely (no more than 2-3 sentences per question). Answers will be graded on the depth of your analysis -- your ability to reflect on the meaning, purpose, and application of a reading, not simply on what the author says. Each assignment will be worth 5 points, and each will be due (submit via Blackboard) by 5pm on the day of class. (LO: 1, 2, 4)</td>
<td>Reflection #1 – June 4</td>
<td>5% each</td>
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<td>Research Prospectus</td>
<td>Write a research prospectus that has four components: (1) Research Question and Rationale; (2) Campaign Context; (3) Literature Review; (4) Proposed Sources and Methods. Each component will be worth up to 2 points, and an additional 2 points will be determined based upon grammar, spelling, and organizational clarity. During Week 1’s class, we will further discuss producing a research report. This prospectus should be about <strong>2-3 single-space pages</strong> (approx. 1,000 words), excluding bibliographic citations or other appendices. (LO: 3)</td>
<td>Week 3 June 11 (Due by 7pm)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Research Findings</td>
<td>Your research (e.g., case study, data analysis, interviews, etc.) should largely be completed by now. You need to submit <strong>2-3 single-spaced typed pages</strong>, summarizing your findings. Once completed, this document should assist you in writing your complete report and helping you to identify the lessons learned and what may be your positional/strategic recommendations. (LO: 3)</td>
<td>Week 5 June 25 (Due by 7pm)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final Report</td>
<td>While we will discuss this during Week 1’s class, your report should have 6 components: (1) Argument and Thesis; (2) Situational Description/Context; (3) Research Results; (4) Political Analysis; (5) Campaign Recommendations; (6) Strategic Positioning and Message Development (Content &amp; Delivery). Each one of these components will be worth 4 points, and an additional 6 points will be determined based upon grammar, spelling, voice, and overall clarity. This report should be no more than <strong>12-13 single-spaced typed pages</strong> (approx. 5,000 words), excluding bibliographic citations, tables and graphs, or other appendices. (LO: 3)</td>
<td>Week 7 July 8 (Due by 7pm)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Description and Learning Objective(s)</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<td>Client Slide Deck</td>
<td>This slide deck will summarize and make compelling the topic and findings of your research. The criteria for assessing its value will fall along five dimensions worth 2 points each: (1) Sequence, (2) Highlighting, (3) Visuals, (4) Compelling, and (5) Grammar and Language Clarity. Submit <strong>no more than 15 slides</strong> (7-10 minutes of talking points, you can write out and place in the &quot;notes&quot; section). (LO: 3)</td>
<td>Week 8 July 16 (Due by 7pm)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation of Client Research</td>
<td>On the last two days of class, we will devote the entire class sessions (7:10-9:40pm) to individual presentations. All students will present; all students in the audience will be asked to pretend they are the client. All students will VOTE (yes or no -- follow the recommendations) on each presentation. <strong>If you do not attend both sessions, you will automatically lose half of the points possible for presenting (2.5 points).</strong> (LO: 3, 4)</td>
<td>Weeks 8 &amp; 9 July 16 &amp; July 23 (Due by 7pm)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>To change politics, one must first show up. Attendance is required &amp; <strong>discussion in class counts towards your final course grade.</strong></td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>A 94-100</td>
<td>Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- 90-93</td>
<td>Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ 87-89</td>
<td>Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B 83-86</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- 80-82</td>
<td>You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all the requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+ 77-79</td>
<td>Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C 73-76</td>
<td>Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
<td>Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Below 70</td>
<td>Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.</td>
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Late Assignments
For each day an assignment is late, it will be marked down one grade (e.g., from a B to a B-). An assignment that is one full week late will be counted as an "F." If you believe you have a legitimate "emergency" that makes it so that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please notify me as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Required Text and Learning Materials In most instances, you’ll read approximately 75 pages per week. Listed below are the 3 books you’ll need to purchase (if you buy them new, it will cost about $30; if you buy them used, it will cost significantly less). **ALL other readings are available on Blackboard (BB on syllabus).**

Books (in order of reading):
3. John Neffinger and Matthew Kohut, *Compelling People: The Hidden Qualities that Make Us Influential*, Plume Publishers, 2014 (at Amazon, new is $15; used is $6)
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. We will miss one Monday for Memorial Day (May 28).

**May 21 – Week 1**
The Class and Your Research
– Introduction & Political Purpose Discussion, 7:10 - 8:00pm
– Syllabus Review & Course Overview, 8:15 - 8:30pm
– What It Means to Do Research – and Your Research Report, 8:30pm - 9:30pm

Readings: Booth, et al., *Craft of Research* (Parts I - III)

*Assignment Due Today – Political Purpose Statement (submit BEFORE class, due by 5pm)*

**May 28 – MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS**

**June 4 – Week 2**
Leadership: What Does It Mean and What Does It Take?
– Discuss Reading Reflections, 7:10 - 8:15pm
– Class Break-Out, Assess Presidents Obama and Trump, 8:30 – 9:00pm
– Class Discussion, 9:00 - 9:30pm

Readings:
2. Neffinger and Kohut, Preface & Chapter 1

*Assignment Due Today – Reading Reflection #1 (to cover week 2 reading, due by 7pm)*

**June 11 –Week 3**
Gaining and Wielding Power: Authority, Legitimacy, and Perception
– Discuss Readings, focus on strategy and positioning, 7:10 - 8:15pm
– Class Break-Out, What Should Democrats Do (assimilate, negotiate, defy?) 8:30 - 9:00pm
– Class Discussion, Compare options against political realities, 9:00 - 9:30pm

Readings:
1. Riker, *Art of Political Manipulation*, Preface, Chapters 2, 12, and Conclusion (BB)
3. Neffinger and Kohut, Chapter 2 (suggested reading, Chapter 3)

*Assignment Due Today – Research Prospectus (submit to Blackboard by 7pm)*
June 18 – Week 4
Individual Research Project Meetup
− During this class, we will break into groups and you will "present" your topic to your group and garner feedback, 7:10pm - 8:15pm
− As a class, will discuss several individual projects, 8:30pm - 9:30pm. The purpose is to: (a) answer any questions you may have about your research, (b) learn about what your colleagues are doing, and (c) help you make sure that your projects are on the right track!

Reading: Booth, et al., *Craft of Research*, (Part IV and V)

June 25 – Week 5
Outmaneuvering Ambitious Rivals & Political Losers
− Discuss Readings, 7:10 - 8:15pm
− Group Exercise, Redirecting 2016 Losses Into Future Wins, 8:30 - 8:45pm
− Class Discussion, 8:45 - 9:30pm

Readings:
3. Shepsle, "Losers in Politics (And How They Sometimes Become Winners)" (BB)

*Assignment Due Today – Research Findings Summary (submit BEFORE class, due by 7pm)*

July 2 – Week 6
Strategic Playmaking
− Guest Speaker: Alan Kelly, former GSPM Adjunct Professor and Founder of Playmaking Systems, LLC

Optional Readings:
1. **Overview**: The Vision
2. **Website**: The Playmaker Influence System
3. **Post**: We Need a Language for Spin, Believe Me
4. **Blogs**: Decoding Donald and Plays for the Presidency
5. **Bio**: Alan Kelly, Founder and Chief Executive

*Assignment Due Today – Reading Reflection #2 (to cover weeks 3, 5 readings, due by 7pm)*

July 10-13 – Week 7
One-on-one project meetings with Professor Cohen. While there will be a deck provided with final tips on how to nail your pitch we will schedule time to meet in-person or by phone to talk through your capstone projects to ensure you are ready to crush the presentation. Alternatively, if we can find a time to meet another night, collectively, we will try to schedule that at the first class. But, generally, you’re way too busy to find a single time that will work.
July 16 – Week 8
Individual Research Project Presentations – Part I

**Assignment Due Today – Final Research Report (submit BEFORE class, due by 7pm)**
**Assignment Due Today – Client Presentation Slide Deck (submit BEFORE class, due by 7pm)**

July 23 – Week 9
Individual Research Project Presentations – Part II

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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.