

**The Graduate School
of Political Management**

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Fall 2018

Aug 27 – Dec 10

Influencing the Media

PMGT 6464.10

3 Credits

Monday/ 7:10-9:40pm

1776 G Street, NW

Room C-115

About the Professors

Lindsay Ellenbogen

I am a communications professional with experience serving public figures in government, private companies and non-profit organizations. I handled public relations for then-Mayor Mike Bloomberg as his DC public relations manager, a post I have also held for a variety of Democrats including former Senator Mary Landrieu. I now run a non-profit and serve on boards of national organizations headquartered in Washington, DC and Los Angeles. LinkedIn is a great go-to for the full blurb:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindsay-ellenbogen-b046b731>

Note: An alum of GSPM with a decade of experience teaching political management in New York and Washington, I am both an instructor and student advocate. To that end, each guest speaker is asked to give you their email and respond to class-related inquiries within a reasonable timeframe. Our class is designed to be dynamic, with a combination of lecture and workshops. We also make every effort to visit newsrooms and newsmakers at their place of business if they cannot join us on campus. Thus, there will be times when the syllabus changes—think of it as a living document, not a tablet carved in stone.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202)-604-2730

Email Address: lindsayellenbogen@gmail.com

Communication

I can be reached via email—please expect a response within 24 hours. Please leave a phone number as I may respond via phone. Online and phone office hours on Wednesdays 3-6 pm unless otherwise noted. To schedule an in-person meeting, please email.

Parita Shah

I have spent much of my professional career developing, implementing, and managing communications strategies and messaging campaigns for political organizations and government institutions, as well as corporate clients and non-profit organizations. I have worked on three presidential campaigns, served two presidential administrations as well as the mayor of Los Angeles, and held a senior position at a non-profit organization and a leading global public affairs firm. Until early 2017, I served in the Obama administration, where I held the position of Press Secretary and Deputy Director of Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Commerce and later as Chief of Staff at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Currently, I am head of public affairs at the streaming music company Pandora. I received my Bachelor

of Arts degree in political science from the University of Southern California and a Master of Public Administration degree from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

Contact Information:

Phone Number: (310)-403-8765

Email Address: pshah77@gmail.com

Communication:

Please contact me by e-mail, unless it is an emergency, in which case you may reach me on my mobile phone. I will respond within 24 hours to all student e-mails. If you would like to arrange an appointment to see me one-on-one, please e-mail me at least 48 hours in advance, and we will arrange a meeting.

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 an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at Whole Foods in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University’s operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Students will be expected to attend each class. *MEDIA TRAINING DATES ARE MANDATORY. These are one-time only opportunities and cannot be rescheduled if you miss class.* The Final Exam is also MANDATORY and cannot be rescheduled. Students are allowed no more than 2 unexcused absences, after which individual grades may be affected. If unexpected events cause a student to miss more than 2 classes, the instructors must be informed as to the nature of the additional absence and could reflect in the student’s final grade.

Technology Policy

Unless specifically directed, this class is a technology-free zone. Notes are to be taken by hand. Please, no laptops and no visible cell phones.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Lara Brown
Director, Political Management Program
larambrown@gwu.edu | 202-994-4545

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

GSPM OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

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.

THE COURSE

Course Description and Overview

Through analyzing media coverage of public officials, political campaigns, legislative battles, interest groups, and issues of public policy, students will formulate strategies in an effort to win favorable news coverage for the issue or candidate and for ending a media crisis.

Note: We will have guest speakers throughout the semester. All speakers are TENTATIVE and will be announced prior to class. Speakers may appear in person or via Skype/FaceTime.

Course Learning Objectives

By examining communication strategies and their practical applications, students will learn written and verbal communication skills necessary to devise a public relations campaign on behalf of a candidate, client or cause. While this course will discuss strategy, we will also review the tactical, basic elements of written, verbal and digital/visual political communication.

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend class, participate in regular class discussions and work on in-class group exercises. Students will be expected to do weekly readings, writing assignments and take a final exam. Assignments are due by the next class and will be returned the following week. Students must bring a hard copy to class as well as email assignments.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Written and Verbal Assignments	See Class Schedule	See Class Schedule	50%
Class Participation	Analysis, contributions, ideas, readings	Ongoing throughout semester	25%
Final Practical Exam	Testing skills /knowledge learned	Dec 10	25%
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 late assignments will be not be eligible for an “A” grade. 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.”

Required Texts and Materials

Peggy Noonan - *On Speaking Well*

Frank Luntz - *Words That Work*

William Zinsser - *On Writing Well*

AP Stylebook

Various handouts will be provided

NOTE: Make sure you have the AP Stylebook. All assignments should follow AP guidelines.

*All readings will be posted to Blackboard.

Description of Ongoing Class Assignment: You will select an issue or politician for whom you serve as communications director. You will assume this role throughout the course, using the same issue or person as the basis for your arguments. You are to conduct a media audit, develop communication goals and devise a communications strategy outlining how you will accomplish said goals. You will develop their message and include the tactics you will use to release it. You will include the full political landscape in which you are working (your opposition, counter-argument) and whom you are trying to influence, (your audience(s) and how you will reach them). We will grade this based on writing and analysis. Each students will need to pick a different candidate/ issue.

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructors reserve 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.



August 27

Welcome and Introductions

A discussion about the upcoming semester and what students will learn from the course. There will be an overview of assignments, readings, in-class exercises, the schedule, final exam and class project.

Case study of a man and a message that turned ugly.

Professor: Ellenbogen and Shah

Assignment To Be Completed by 9/10 (Email to Professor Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy to Class):

- You are the newly hired communications director for a candidate, cause, or organization. It's a 3-month stint from September 12 to December 12. For whom do you work and why? Write a 1-page job description including whom you work for, what your responsibilities are and what the expectations are for your role. ****Please note**-- this choice will carry through to other assignments throughout the semester.**
- Read WP news articles:
 - o "John McCain reports for duty in his own heroically touching HBO tribute"
 - o Scott Peterson, "It was my job, and I didn't find him"
 - o "The working-class struggles that propelled Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to victory"

Guest Speaker: Martine Charles, President and CEO at M.A.R.C Global Communications and former PR representative for Tour de France winner and US Postal Service Cycling Team Member Tyler Hamilton

September 3 (Labor Day): No Class

September 10

Getting There: Constructing the Narrative

Class will examine politicians, organizations, and issues to determine what their “narrative” is. We will discuss the importance of ‘the story behind’ and the difference between a bio and a narrative.

Professor: Ellenbogen

What is the story you want to tell?

- Narrative answers the question of “who” a person is; how they developed their personal or cultural identity; for issue campaigns, the narrative answers the question “why,” why is the cause necessary, what was the genesis and what is the fight about?
- Tell your story – what are the pitfalls to avoid? Are there holes and if so, how do you fill them?
- Narratives are stories, not resumes or biographies.

Assignment to be Completed by 9/17 (Email to Professor Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy for Hannah Pick-Up Next Class):

- Write a narrative for a candidate or cause Your story should make us care, make us relate and want to read about him/her/it.
- Read Luntz 1-3

Note: Classes on September 17th and 24th will focus on message development



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September 17

Part I: Developing an Effective Message

Professor: Shah

What makes a message effective, and how we go about developing one? During this class, we will:

- Discuss elements of a good message
- Explore how surveys, focus groups and other tools can be used to determine what is a good message

Assignment to be Completed by 9/24 (Email to Prof. Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy to Class):

- Write 3 top line messages for your candidate, cause, or organization. Each message should include 2-3 supporting points that include credible evidence and/or data. Remember—These will be the messages that will be used as a basis for all communication for your effort.
- Read Luntz Ch. 5 “Be the Message”, Noonan “Some Basics to Note”
- Read WP article “Republican’s embrace of Trump tests her standing with women”
- Read WP article “Ted Cruz changes his lone-star approach”
- Read NYT article “Trump again falsely blames Democrats for his separation tactic”
- Read Vanity Fair article, “‘This is what power looks like’:
- Read The Hill article, “Doctors group warns of health risks to migrant children”

Guest Speaker: Noah Theran, Senior VP of Global Public Affairs & Communications, Internet Association

September 24

Developing an Effective Message Part II: Message Delivery

Professor: Ellenbogen

You now have a message but can you stay on it? What happens if your delivery falls flat—or worse—takes a wrong turn? These two classes will be held at the award-winning Public Relations strategy firm of Qorvis Communications. We will discuss and practice the skill of message delivery. During this class, students will be interviewed on-camera. Student performance will be taped for peer and professional feedback.

Please note: Class will be held at Qorvis Communications:

1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Suite 500

Washington DC 20036

It is off the Red Line at either DuPont Circle or Farragut North. It is a 10-15 minute walk from campus. We will gather in the lobby at 7:10pm. An ON-TIME arrival is essential. There is no “make-up” for this class.

- How is a message delivered in an interview? Language, actions, non-verbal communication
- A few of the interview tactics and pointers we will cover:
 - Reporter controls the question, you control the answer
 - What to do when a curveball question comes your way; pivot or punch back
 - Do you ever abandon your message on the spot? How to “bridge” back
 - How to use appropriate word choice for a given situation; catastrophe vs. bump in the road
 - Have you captivated your audience? If not, what tactics can you use?
 - Silence- when to use

Assignment to be Completed by 10/1:

- Listen: FT podcast, “How persuasion works in business, life and politics”
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/ft-alphachat/id448302257?mt=2&i=1000383368011>
- Read WP article “In business and in office, Trump pursues strategy of self-victimization”
- Read AP article “Republicans risking conservative backlash over immigration”

October 1:

Developing an Effective Message Part III: Persuasion



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Professor: Ellenbogen ***Please note:** This class will also be held at **Qorvis Communications.**

Message is not fact and it’s not a list of things you want to accomplish. Message is a rhetorical device that conveys ideas, values and point of view in a way your audience can relate. Your message will be subject to argument. You will have to use various appeals to communicate your message. The most effective messages are persuasive and can operate on different rhetorical levels, particularly in response to an argument.

- Rhetoric: logical, emotional, moral
- Faulty Reasoning: circular, faulty cause and effect, either/or thinking, over-generalizations, faulty emotional appeals
- Developing responses using message and persuasion

Assignment to be Completed by 10/15 (Email to Prof. Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy for Hannah Pick Up Next Class): Find a news talk show segment on You Tube relating to your issue/politician—look for the rhetoric and faulty reasoning. Cite examples of each in the segment. Write a response that uses solid reasoning to make a persuasive argument. Find a segment applicable to the person, issue or organization you represent.

October 8 (Fall Break): No Class

October 15

Setting Communication Goals and Developing a Plan

Professor: Shah

The first and second steps of strategic planning are articulating the goal and defining the issue. In today's class, we will:

- Goal setting: What do we want to accomplish?
- Discuss the elements of a good strategic plan
- Explore: What is a media audit? Why do we need one?
- Case Study: How to analyze a client, set goals, and develop an effective strategy

Assignment to be Completed by 10/22:

- Read Luntz Chapter 6, Zinsser Chapters 1-5 (uploaded to Blackboard)
- Read MLive article "Woman fired for bringing laxative-filled brownies"

Guest Speaker: Jennifer Millerwise Dyck, Corporate Communications, Walmart; Former Senior Communications Staff, George W. Bush Administration

October 22

What is News?

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Professor: Ellenbogen

We examine the building blocks of news stories. Why is something news? Who cares about it? What's the point? Understanding what "the media" looks for when reporting news is essential to developing an eye and an ear for it.

- Do you have a target audience?
- Will they care about what you have to say? How will you make them care?
- News stories can be noteworthy because of their WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY or HOW or some combination. Your story will draw interest because of these subjects.

Discussion: We will look at several stories and discuss what about them makes them NEWS

Assignment to be Completed by 10/29 (Email to Prof Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy for Hannah Pick Up Next Class): You are the editor. Find an article/TV clip (applicable to the person, issue or organization you represent) in print or online that is unusual ...why did this make news? How did people respond? Include the news story and write a paragraph explaining why this piece made it in print or online.

- Read AP article "I never said that! High-tech deception of 'deepfake' videos"

Guest Speaker: Ginger Gibson, Political Correspondent at Reuters

October 29

Fake News!!

Professor: Shah

Discussion: What is fake news? Is it a new phenomenon?

- Historical perspective: From Yellow Journalism to the Birther Movement
- Review Case Study
- The role Fake News plays in traditional and social media: how does it affect perceptions?
- Media bias vs. Fake News

Assignment to be Completed by 11/5:

- Invent a scenario in which your cause/politician is a victim of a fake news story and describe how the story evolved and what you would do to combat the story
- Read WP article “White House routine: Deny, contradict, admit”
- Read TIME article “An Unprecedented Scandal”

Guest Speaker: Media Matters

November 5

Getting Noticed and Making News: The Tools



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The next three classes will focus on ways to communicate the news you wish to make. We will examine how to write a press release, pitch a story and use photographs to tell a story on digital mediums.

Professor: Ellenbogen

The Basic Written Tools and Organization

- Elements and format
 - Headlines and Sub-heads
 - Lead paragraphs
 - Quotes
 - Writing the Sound Bite
 - Pertinent Facts
 - Writing for impact
 - When to do an event vs. releasing paper
 - Talking Points
 - Sample releases, advisories and talking points

Assignment to be Completed by 11/12 (Email to Prof. Ellenbogen and Bring Hard Copy for Hannah Pick Up Next Class):

- Write a press release announcing news your candidate, organization or cause is seeking to make. Write a media advisory for an event your candidate, organization or cause is planning to advance the news announced in said release. What is the headline you want to see? What are the elements of the story the press will be interested in and how can you accommodate them? Keep the visuals in mind.

November 12

The Basics of Pitching and the Media's Perspective

Professor: Shah

Talking to Journalists: Pitches and Guidelines

- Recap: Election 2018
- The Basics: how to pitch, how not to pitch
- How to write an elevator pitch
- In Class Exercise: Practicing a Pitch (subject matter to be provided)
- What is the media's perspective?

Assignment to be Completed by 11/19:

- Read Noonan "Soundbites and Soundbites II"
- Develop two different pitches you intend to send via email to a print reporter and a TV reporter. Identify the reporter and outlet. Write the attention grabbing line and the pitch text, and include the media advisory and press release from your previous assignment.

Guest Speaker: Election Recap: Shripal Shah, Vice President, American Bridge



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November 19

Visual and Social Communication

Professor: Shah

How has the consumption of media evolved over time? Today's class will review:

- How to effectively use and write for social media to influence others
- Social media as a medium to break news
- The power of visuals
- Preview of next week's class: An overview of the relationship between reporters and communications professionals

Assignment to be Completed by 11/26:

- Create a Tweet, Facebook, and an Instagram post and/or story (1 for each platform, including photos). The photos and language should be engaging and move your message.
- Create a short 20-second verbal pitch for a reporter and be ready to share in the next class.

Guest Speaker: TBA

November 26

Understanding the Other Side of the Desk: Reporters

Professor: Shah

A review of the relationship between reporter and communications professional. This class will be held at the offices of Axios Media:

3100 Clarendon Blvd #1300
Arlington, VA 22201

Assignment to be Completed by 12/3:

- Put your journalist hat on and write a story that fits into your communications narrative, keeping in mind what the reporter has seen and heard (press release, pitches, etc). Identify which outlet you write for and who the audience is.
- Read WSJ article “At Southwest Airlines, the Minutes after Disaster Struck”
- Read Business Insider article “This timeline shows exactly how the Thai cave rescue unfolded”
- Read AP article “DC’s public schools go from success story to cautionary tale”
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December 3

What is a Crisis? And Reactive Damage Control

Professor: Ellenbogen

Danger! Damage Control—What to do when the unexpected happens.

Crisis/Emergencies/Scandals -- Guidelines

- Getting the information you need to respond quickly, accurately
- “Be quick, don’t hurry.”
- Thinking fast: killing the story, damage control, rebuttals
- Digging out of a Hole: A good example; a poor example

In-class Assignment: What are some recent political/corporate crises and how would you handle differently? We will analyze and discuss recent examples. Class will break up into teams. Each team will be given a set of facts and a scenario and must develop a communications strategy “on the fly.”

Guest Speaker: TBA

December 10

Final Exam

Exam is THREE PARTS:

Written exam: You will be given a scenario outlining a person or organization with facts and news to be made. You must write a press release, one social media tag/lead/message, and determine your target audience. Be prepared to write where you are sending this release, where you are posting and WHY. You will have 45 minutes to write, print and email release to me.

Verbal exam: Working with the same scenario, you will develop and deliver a pitch for a to-be-determined news outlet, one general news and one specialized publication.

Reading Questions

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.*

****All classes are “off the record” – that is, materials, discussions or photographs cannot be quoted or represented via social media or the press unless otherwise noted.*