

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

MPS in Political Management
Fall 2019

Corporate Public Affairs
PMGT 6420/CRN 24586

Wed, Aug 28 – Wed, Dec 4
7:10 – 9:40pm
1776 G St., NW, Rm C-117
Make-up day: Wed, Dec 11

BASIC INFORMATION

Instructor

Chris Bender is Vice President of the [Public Affairs Council](#), the leading international association for public affairs professionals. Chris sees public affairs as an essential business function, shaping the political and policy landscapes and guiding public perception. His approach includes quantifying public affairs work in financial terms, linking advocacy and communications strategies to organizational targets.

As Vice President of the Public Affairs Council, Chris oversees the organization's executive education programs, member services, research and benchmarking consulting services. He leads the development of customized leadership, strategy, management and public affairs training for organizations across the country and, working together with his team, expands the Council's networks for international, political involvement, corporate social responsibility and association public affairs professionals.

Chris' nearly 20-year career spans the public, private and non-profit sectors and includes leadership roles in strategic communication, policy and advocacy. Before joining the Council, Chris was vice president for the communications agency [Adfero](#). For more than five years prior, he led North American public affairs for the global biotech company [Novozymes](#). He helped craft the company's external narrative, turning complex science into compelling stories, and expanded connections with key third-party stakeholders from NGOs to academic institutions.

Chris previously served as deputy press secretary and speechwriter for United States Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and as communications director for Washington, DC Deputy Mayor Eric Price and speechwriter for Washington, DC Mayor Anthony Williams. He is a member of the [National Press Club](#) and an adjunct professor at George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management, where he teaches courses on corporate public affairs and issues management.

Chris received his MA in political management from GWU after receiving his BA in English from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Contact Information

Chris Bender
cbender@pac.org | 202.787.5970
[@cseanbender](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Communication

Email is most efficient: I'll generally respond within 24 hours. The *only* email I use is cbender@pac.org. Assignments sent to @gwu.edu are not considered submitted. Please do not send messages via LinkedIn or Twitter for class purposes. You're welcome to call my office or we can meet by appointment.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard [site](#) has been set up for this course. Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site. Support for Blackboard is available at 202.994.4948 or [the helpdesk](#).

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
- Faculty should 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 should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for course-related activities.

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. Read the [University Code of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW's [Disability Support Services](#) 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.

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, contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202.994.5300 or see a counselor in person). [Click here](#) for reporting options and resources at GWU and the community.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience an emergency during class, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we need to leave, we will meet in front of Cosi at 1700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW (corner of 17th and G Sts., NW) to make certain everyone is safe. Please refer to [Campus Advisories](#) for the latest information on the University’s operating status.

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. Please share your thoughts: I take student feedback seriously and make strategic shifts in the course based on it. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by sharing it with me or contacting:

Dr. Todd Belt
Director, Political Management Program
tbelt@gwu.edu | 202.994.4363

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, Graduate School of Political Management
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202.994.9309

GSPM 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 to complete and submit assignments on time.
- 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. 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 until an election concludes. Students will be best positioned for success in the practical political world if they develop and exercise excellent written communication and time management skills.

Attendance and Class Participation

Consider this call on-the-job training: You, like a corporate public affairs professional, are expected to be present and active participants in their company’s work. Attendance and participation are prerequisites for learning from, enjoying and doing well in this class. Attendance is essential.

You are experts at what you do. You understand many of the concepts we’re going to cover in class. In addition to getting experience working in teams – as you’ll be required to do in a corporate setting – you’ll learn from your classmates. A large portion of this class’ assignments involve group work. You are also expected to read all assigned material in advance and be prepared to discuss your views.

Should you find yourself with a scheduling conflict, please contact me as soon as possible:

- Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade.
- Two or more unexcused absences during the semester will result in a failing participation grade.
- We will have one in-class graded assignment. Unless you have a previous and documented commitment, attendance is required to participate. Failure to participate will earn a zero 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.

Social Media and Digital Devices

I understand that some students prefer to take notes on computers or tablets. I do, however, find it incredibly disrespectful to your peers when anyone is texting or messaging during class. Unless it's an emergency, please refrain from personal communications while in class. Anyone who refuses to respect this norm will be asked to step outside the classroom until their conversation is complete.

THE COURSE

Course Description and Overview

In 13 weeks – if you're an active participant – you'll have the tools to become a top-flight strategist
Corporate Public Affairs (CPA) is a course about strategy.

First and foremost, this is a class about the art and science of strategic thinking, planning, execution and assessment – and the relationship between those highly-transferrable skills and, in our case, public affairs. This class recognizes that, whatever your career path, it's important to be a good tactician but essential to be a great strategist. Public affairs professionals who function at the strategic level are the ones who get ahead.

Course Learning Objectives

Within that frame, this class intends to help you develop – or further develop – the skills to become top-flight strategists, earning you opportunities and recognition, and opening doors for your career:

- Understanding and assessing your environment and the various factors that shape it, and anchoring your approach in that assessment;
- Thinking, working and communicating in a way that demonstrates critical thinking, logical process and concrete outcomes;
- Formulating, assessing and making the strategic choices that must be made for success;
- Clarifying the core challenge, not just its symptoms, and strategically and methodically solving it;
- Assessing with data if your solution did the job; and
- Articulating your outcomes in a way that your audience believes is the best approach.

With strategy as a foundation, we'll turn to public affairs.

Public affairs is a business function

In the private sector, every part of an organization is responsible for achieving the company's bottom-line business targets. Having freedom to operate is no guarantee. This class will help define public affairs' (PA) critical role in defending, maintaining and growing that freedom to operate.

As you know, public affairs uses government relations, communications, advocacy and political engagement to achieve its goals. Our course is rooted in the idea that PA is a business function, not a service one: PA is a company's primary tool for influencing policy, regulation or public perception, and the decision-makers and thought leaders involved. Our approach will focus on creating a clear link between public affairs portfolios, strategies and tactics, and an organization's bottom-line goals (financial, social and potentially more):

- Anchoring public affairs goals in the organization's larger ambitions;
- Ensuring every tactic – from press releases to Hill meetings – is employed to grow, defend or preserve a market. There are no "soft" activities (work without a reason);
- Measuring results in bottom-line impact, not reach;
- Employing the tools and speaking the language of business, both in PA portfolio design and articulating strategy;
- Establishing the function as a "trusted advisory" to company leadership and ensuring major corporate decisions are run through PA among other functions.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR*

*Instructors reserve the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to align with class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. While some guest lecturers are booked, others may be added and announced prior to their appearance.

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.

Week 1: Introduction**W1: August 28**

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due*
<i>Welcome and introductions</i> Personal learning objectives. Syllabus and expectations.	None	150-word personal biography
<i>Laying the foundation</i> Core elements of strategic thinking and process, and the relationship to PA.		

*Assignments are due at 5pm unless otherwise noted. Assignment details are on page 11.

Weeks 2 – 3: Adopting the strategist’s mindset and approach**W2: September 4**

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
Case study/group exercise	<i>Playing to Win</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1	None
<i>Fundamentals of strategy</i> Exploring how strategists think differently about environmental scans; possibilities, opportunities and threats; and clarifying the core opportunity and/or challenge.		

W3: September 11

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
Case study/group exercise	<i>Playing to Win</i> , Ch. 2, 3	None
<i>Fundamentals of strategy</i> Grounding big ideas in a strategic plan. Deep dive on the planning process. Understanding strategy as choices.		

Weeks 4 – 7: Business basics and PA as business development

W4: September 18

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>Group assignment: Executive presentations</i> Followed by analysis and key learnings.</p> <p><i>PA's business purpose</i> Examining the business case for PA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the good or service needs PA • How a PA creates, maintains trust • What's required for private sector success 	TBA	<p>Strategy memo: 9/17 at 12pm</p> <p>Board presentation: 9/18</p>

W5: September 25/SLGR

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>Guest speaker: Business basics for PA</i> Understanding company financial performance, reading a balance sheet and communicating to the market.</p>	TBA	None

W6: October 2

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p>Case study/group exercise</p> <p><i>Exceeding expectations of company leadership</i> Getting and keeping your executive's ear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking the language of your organization • Anticipating needs and delivering before asked <p><i>Calculating PA ROI</i> Using math and metrics to prove impact.</p>	<p><i>Playing to Win</i>, Ch. 4</p> <p>WSJ: View From the Top: How CEOs See Their Fields and the World</p>	None

W7: October 9

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>Guest speaker: Sales and negotiation techniques</i> Understanding motivators, making the sale, BATNA and closing the deal. Applying these strategies and tactics to PA.</p>	<i>Playing to Win</i> , Ch. 5	None

Weeks 8 – 12: Layering strategy into core public affairs work

W8: October 16

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>Guest speaker: Managing Controversies and Crises</i></p> <p>How to end, at worst, where you started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and deploying a rapid response plan • Educating and deploying spokespeople • Understanding public sentiment and tolerance • Knowing when to return to “normal” 	<p>NYT: Inside the Hotel Industry’s Plan to Combat Airbnb</p>	<p>Roadshow presentation materials: 10/16</p>

W9: October 23/BOD Meeting

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>Guest speaker: Engaging with external stakeholders</i></p> <p>Why companies need partners. What partners create that a company can’t independently create. Building trust among volunteers and advocates.</p>		

W10: October 30

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p>Case study/group exercise</p> <p><i>Reducing and managing business risk</i></p> <p>Strategic issues management process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping your organization’s issues of importance • Understanding, assessing, planning and executing • Evaluating performance 	<p><i>Playing to Win</i>, Ch. 6, 7</p>	<p>None</p>

W11: November 6

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<p><i>In-class assignment</i></p> <p><i>Elections and Business</i></p> <p>Interpreting the 2018 election results and their impact on the business environment. Making “soft” outcomes concrete.</p>	<p><i>Playing to Win</i>, Ch. 8</p>	<p>In-class assignment: Details announced in class</p>

W12: November 13

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<i>Guest speaker: Political involvement</i> Understand the law. Leaning forward without breaking it, focusing on legal, ethical, financial and impact considerations. Getting politically involved, with and without giving money. Case study/group exercise	TBA	None

Weeks 13 – 14: Tying it all together**W13: November 20**

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<i>Class wrap-up</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What we learned and why it matters • Examining the future of our profession • Understanding how we train ourselves, staff our functions and prepare for future trends <i>Group work on final presentations</i>	<i>Playing to Win, Conclusion</i>	None

**** NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 27 – HAPPY THANKSGIVING ****

W14: December 4

Discussion plan	Reading due	Assignment due
<i>Final group presentations, analysis and key learnings</i>	None	Strategy memo: 12/3 at 12pm Presentation deck: 12/4

CURRENT GUEST SPEAKERS

- W4/Sept 18: [xx]
- W5/Sept 25: [xx]
- W7/Oct 9: [xx]
- W8/Oct 16: [Peter Segall](#), crisis management expert
- W9/Oct 23: [Greg Houston](#), Co-Founder and President, Big Things Group
- W10/Oct 30: [xx]
- W12/Nov 13: [Amie Adams](#), President, Dunn Associates

REQUIRED READING AND/OR AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS

Articles and videos as linked in the course calendar. Additional materials as assigned (news articles, thought leadership pieces and/or videos) via email or Blackboard.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND WEIGHTING

We'll talk through each assignment in more detail. All assignments have a maximum 100 points.

**Assignments are due at 5pm unless otherwise noted.*

Wk	Type	Assignment	Due*	Weight (%)
1		Biography What's your story in 150 words? Please share a unique detail about yourself and your goals for the class.	August 29	-
4	Group	Strategic plan and presentation Detail your plan for achieving your chosen organization's top-line business goals using strategic mindset, approach, planning and execution.	Strategy memo: September 17 (12pm) Board presentation: September 18	20
8	Individual	Roadshow slides Describe your function's work to other stakeholders, including explanation of approach and ways of working, and a current inventory of Issues.	October 16	20
11	Individual	In-Class Assignment Details to be announced day of the assignment.	November 6	20
14	Group	Final assignment and presentation Assignment prompt to be posted to BlackBoard on November 13.	Strategy memo: December 3 (12pm) Board presentation: December 4	20
-	Both	Class participation Attendance and active participation, advancing discussion and learning based on your ideas and experience.		20

GRADING

Standard Grade Scale for 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.

*Assignments submitted up to two days after deadline will be penalized 1/3 letter grade. Assignments submitted more than two days after deadline will be penalized an additional 1/3 letter grade per day.

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