

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management
Spring 2020

Applied Pol. Communications - PMGT 6402.10

Thursday Nights 7:10-9:40pm
1776 G, C-115 January 13th to May 12th

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor: Evan Tracey, SVP National Media Inc.

Mr. Tracey is a Senior Vice President at the political consulting firm National Media Inc. (NMI) in his role Mr. Tracey oversees the company's outreach to political campaigns, PACs, issue campaigns, and public affairs, advertising clients. He also builds relationships with media sellers to direct and craft communications solutions and works closely with the firm's team of research, planning, and placement professionals to develop new multi-screen communications strategies. Additionally, Mr. Tracey collaborates with the analytics team to build client-facing data tools for the political and public affairs marketplace. Mr. Tracey's responsibilities also include evaluating new technologies for partnerships to assist NMI's clients to launch measure and optimize the most efficient communications campaigns possible.

With more than two decades of experience building successful businesses in the political and public affairs advertising research industry. Mr. Tracey founded the nation's top strategic media data and research firm for politics and public affairs, advertising Kantar Media's Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG). While leading CMAG, he designed some innovative media data and analytics services that are still used by a diverse roster of political and public affairs and corporate clients. As president of CMAG, he became the leading voice on trends in politics and issue media as CNN's on-air media consultant. Mr. Trace was a featured speaker and lecturer at the Vicente Fox Center, Harvard's Kennedy School, and over 100 other forums on political and advocacy media.

Before returning to National Media Inc. in 2013, He was the Senior Vice President of Communications for the American Clean Coal Electricity from 2011 to 2013, where he managed and set the direction and strategy for a \$42 million communications campaign to shape public opinion.

Mr. Tracey has been a member of the faculty at the George Washington University School of Political Management since 2006 teaching several different classes on campaign communications. Along with his work with the media, he presented and provided written commentary to some groups, including the American Advertising Federation, Television Bureau of Advertising (TVB), National Association of

Broadcasters (NAB), and the Radio Advertising Bureau. Mr. Tracey also wrote a regular column for *Advertising Age* magazine.

In 2013, he authored a chapter on Presidential election advertising titled "Political Advertising: When More Meant Less" for the book *Campaigning for the President 2012 Strategy and Tactics*, edited by Dennis Johnson.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 683-4877 (O) 703-298-6229 (M)

Email Address: evantracey@live.com

Communication

For outside of class meetings, the best way to communicate with Mr. Tracey is via email at evantracey@live.com, or by telephone, 703-298-6229. Mr. Tracey typically arrives 15 minutes before class starts and is always happy to stay after class for any individual questions. When needed, I can usually find a time to meet or talk by telephone if the matter requires more time.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site **daily** 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 have to leave here, we will meet at **the location to be decided on in our 1st class**, 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

You are expected to attend **all** classes and turn in assignments on the dates in which they are due. Participation in the in-class discussions is also appreciated and encouraged. **If you need to miss a class, it is your responsibility to get class notes and any assignments.** Academic Calendar:
<https://www.gwu.edu/academic-calendar>

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 imperative that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Deputy Director, Political Management Program
| 202-994-5512

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

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 useful 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 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 at its intended recipients until after the election was concluded. Students will be best positioned for success in the practical political world if they have developed and exercise excellent written communication and time management skills.

Course Description and Overview

In politics, information is the raw material, and communications are derivative. Successful campaigns and candidates are usually the ones that understand the role of the candidate, the voters, the media, the competitive environment, strategy, tactics, and budget.

This course is designed for the GSPM students to learn the difference between the specialized forms of communication, the class is designed to start the students out with a foundation build on the fundamentals, and then focus on specific tools and aspects of communications and then connect the dots on how to design a communications strategy to achieve specific campaign goals.

This course is an applied knowledge class. Students will be asked to utilize what they have read and learned about in class to assess current campaign strategies and rhetoric to understand, interpret and advise on-going political campaigns, policy campaigns and work within crisis situations. Students will continue to learn how to evaluate opponents' messages with a critical and strategic eye.

The course will help you better communicate internally and externally within the context of a political or issue campaign. We will look back on the previous elections as well as ongoing campaigns and public policy efforts as our case studies.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Analyze and understand the construction of campaign messages and the dynamics of political communication in an election
2. Develop effective political messages that consider issues, such as strengths, weaknesses, vocabulary, and timing.
3. Adapt political communications to respond to events, while continuing to align and reinforce longer-term goals and strategies.
4. Write well-organized documents intended to effectively communicate your point of view and be more influential inside a campaign structure.
5. Formulate and execute political communications and strategies using paid, earned, and owned media across traditional, digital and social media channels.

Course Requirements

Every week, students must show up prepared to discuss what you have read in the relevant political news, as each class will begin with a discussion of the previous week's events and happenings. In these talks, you will be asked to evaluate current events and predict their impact on political party and election politics. You may also be asked to share something you read that week that you feel beneficial to your on-going understanding of political campaigns and campaign rhetoric, tactics and the use of images.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Memo #1	Will be assigned during the first class	Week 2	10%
Memo #2	TBD	Week 4	10%
Memo #3	TBD	Week 6	10%
Final Project	A final project will be due at the last class. Your project will have several elements that will be turned in during the semester.	Week 14	60% (the plan will be assigned in stages)
Attendance and Participation			10%
Total			100%

Following is the grading 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 have completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+ 77-79	Needs improvement in content and effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C 73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials (I will likely assign an additional book at our 1st class)

The Responsive Cord,

By Tony Schwartz

Inside Campaigns, Elections through the Eyes of Political Professionals

By William J Feltus, Kenneth M Goldstein, Matthew Dallek

So You think You Want to Run for Congress

By George Franklin

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

Losers

By Michael Lewis

The Great Revolt

By Selena Zito and Brad Todd

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

In consulting the schedule below, please note that guest availability may lead to changing a few of these sessions. Also, this class is often dictated by political events. Thus a discussion of current events may be more relevant to the students than the proposed topic on a given date.

Week 1: Introduction

What is applied political communications? Where and how does your communications and campaign strategy intersect? First writing assignment will be given in class.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Overview of the course, books, and outside readings
- In-class expectations and assignments
- How should you think about communications
- What is the messaging environment and how does it impact your plans

- What are the communication tools and channels

Reading Due Today: Be familiar with the books assigned

Assignment(s) Due Today: None

Week 2: Building Blocks of your Communications Strategy & Message Development

In this class, we will discuss the elements of communications planning, and how these determine whom you need to reach, influence, and target. Additionally, the class will explore topics related to the message space and how you should construct a winning narrative.

Topic and Content & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Communication planning and the situation analysis
- Who are the voters you have, who are the voters you need?
- Demographics and Geographic's
- Apply your candidates to the race, identification of strengths and weaknesses
- Framing the race and strategies for forming a winning narrative/ Framing
- Budget and how it impacts communications

Reading Due Today: So You Think You Want to Run for Congress

Assignment(s) Due Today: Memo #1 "What Should They Be Saying to Us."

Week 3: Thinking about the Brand – Cornflakes vs. Candidates

How branding works with consumers and voters alike.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Corporate vs. Political Branding
- Building, maintaining and defending your brand
- The Party Brand vs. The Candidate Brand
- Social media, branding and social awareness
- Brands change with user experience & the death of a brand
- Hispanic and Ethnic Targeting and the Brand

Reading Due Today: The Responsive Cord

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 4: Elements of your communication plan & building your communication model.

In this class, we will start to connect the dots on building a communication plan to achieve the campaign goals. We will introduce the topics like campaign structure, planning, and execution.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Role of research (opposition and polling)
- Who is on the communications team
- Construction of a message grid
- Creating and managing your content roadmap and editorial calendar
- Role of social media
- Can you cultivate, produce and leverage "super friends."

Reading Due Today: Inside Campaigns Chapter 1-3

Assignment(s) Due Today: TBD

Class Date Pivot to Tools of the Trade:

Model of Influence – Communication Strategies Paid, Earned Owned

Week 5: You are in the Content Business: Paid, Earned, and Owned Communications.

Campaigns are now in the content business; with new digital distribution channels, the campaign must now create more content than ever before.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- The power of image and words and how not to misuse this power
- Emotion, storytelling and other ways to get your content to stick
- Content production
- Content placement and media channels

Reading Due Today: Inside Campaigns Chapter 4-7

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 6: Media Consumption and Content Delivery

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Communications ecosystem
- How are your voters consuming media
- Using your content for maximum impact
- Syncing the content with the distribution channels
- What's the role of social & digital media
- Storytelling with content

Reading Due Today: Inside Campaigns Chapter 8-10

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 7: The Press & Communications (Part 1)

The post-Watergate and Twitter addicted media makes dealing with the press harder and more complicated, we will discuss strategies for working with the press and getting the most favorable coverage possible in this brave new and changing world.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Role of the press in your campaign
- Why (good) writing matters
- Overview of the tools of the trade
- Strategies for working with the press and influencing the voters using pop-culture.
- The political news cycle
- Communicating with the press
- Pitching the press/good press
- Reacting to bad press
- Social media and the press
- Understanding the point of view of journalist
- Media Training And Preparing Materials

Reading Due Today:

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 8: The Press & Communications (Part 2)

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Press calendar/crafting plans and executing press events/media tours
- Creating “carry forward” from your events
- Message discipline & rapid response
- Pitching negative stories
- The art of the leak

Reading Due Today: TBD

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 9: Paid Media

We will study how you can determine which media connects best with your coalition of voters, and how this fits within your budget.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Use of big or small data
- Understanding media lingo and currency
- Buying & Planning media
- Building your media campaign

Reading Due Today: The Great Revolt

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 10: Applying Tactic to a Strategy

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Define your campaign goals
- Message space and political culture and how this impacts communications
- Lock in on your objectives
- What are the variables you must overcome
- What is the game plan?
- Process + Tactics + Timing = Outcome
- Types of strategies and what works for your campaign

Reading Due Today: TBD

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 11: Campaign Timing and Tactics

We study how optimizing the measured communications and contacts across paid, owned & earned channels with the goal of reducing waste of the resources within a campaign.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

We will discuss strategies to enter a political campaign. The dos and Don'ts around your communications rollout. How to create the maximum amount of carry-forward to your initial campaign message.

- How and when to enter the race.
- Announcing a campaign
- Candidate rollout
- Communications efforts during inspection time (Pre and Post Announcement)
- Surfacing Issues

Reading Due Today: The Great Revolt

Assignment(s) Due Today: TBD

Week 12: Negative Campaigning

Negative politics are a fact of life, so in this class, we will discuss how, when and why to go negative and what to do when you are attacked.

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Introducing and driving a negative message
- Negative attacks and why voters secretly love them
- Negative attacks do's and don't
- What to do when your campaign is attacked
- The press and negative attacks
- Tools for going negative

Reading Due Today:

Assignment(s) Due Today: TBD

Week 13: Closing out the campaign

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- The pivotal moments that count the most
- Momentum and voter enthusiasm
- The endless loop of zingers talking points, and one-liner
- Winning the attention economy
- Preparing for the shocking moments that can dramatically transform the race
- Making your closing argument

Reading Due Today: Brand Media Strategy

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week 14:

Topic and Content Covered & Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Oral presentation of the student's final project.

Reading Due Today: None.

Assignment(s) Due Today: **the Final project, written with the oral presentation.**

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.