

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Semester: Summer 2019

Class start/end date: May 23 to July 25

Course Name: Digital Content Creation

PMGT 6470.10

3 Credits

Class Day/Time: Thursdays, 7:10-9:40 p.m.

1957 E Street, Room 112

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructors

Alex Percival

As the Vice President of Digital at Mercury Public Affairs, Alex helps organizations of all shapes and sizes optimize their digital performance. Alex provides strategic digital guidance to advocacy campaigns, consumer brands, nonprofits, and trade associations.

Alex began her career at VOX Global, a bipartisan public affairs firm, where she developed online advertising and content solutions for clients that raised awareness, persuaded audiences, and generated action. Alex has a diverse digital foundation in organic and paid social media management, multiplatform online campaigns, email marketing, graphic design, and digital analytics.

Alex earned a master's degree from The George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management and a bachelor's degree from the College of Charleston.

Jonathan Halls

Jonathan Halls is a media training specialist and has been teaching and doing media for more than 25 years. Formerly head of television, radio operations and new media (digital) training at the BBC, he was also training manager of the BBC's New Media Training Unit in the pioneering days of the Web. He started his career on air as a journalist/broadcaster in the early nineties.

After the BBC he designed and delivered the training at the Daily Telegraph's groundbreaking converged newsroom transformation for IFRA Newsplex and has trained journalists, editors and producers in digital storytelling around the world at companies including The Times (London), Financial Times (London),

DeVolkskrant (Netherlands), Metro (London), Le Monde (France), L'Espresso (Portugal), Romania Libera (Romania), Times (India), Mediacorp (Singapore), BBC, ITV, Channel Four, and many more.

He has served on the jury for WAN IFRA's *European Digital Media Awards*, *Asian Digital Media Awards*, *Middle East Digital Media Awards* and INMA's *Global Media Awards*. Jonathan more recently has focused energy on helping learning professionals develop media production skills to further learning in distributed organizations and is author of several books on this topic.

Contact Information

Contact the instructors through Blackboard. We will aim to respond to emails within 24 to 72 hours during the working week. Office hours will be by appointment.

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 have to leave here, we will meet at a location to be determined in class 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

Participants need to attend 80% of classes and complete all assignments to pass.

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~~ [Dr Todd L Belt](mailto:tlbelt@gwu.edu)
~~Director, Political Management Program~~ [Professor and Director, Political Management Program](mailto:tlbelt@gwu.edu)
~~larambrown@gwu.edu~~ tlbelt@gwu.edu | 202-994-4545/4363

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, 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 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.

Course Description and Overview

This class gives students a practical set of skills to plan and produce digital content for campaigns. It covers basic theory about digital storytelling, the dynamics of telling those stories in different modalities (video, text, graphics, etc) across different platforms (desktop, tablet, mobile) and how to produce the content as well as administer the campaign. The class is a mix of theory and lots of practice. Students will work in teams to create a digital campaign.

Course Learning Objectives

- Discuss how media works to convey information in terms of cognitive psychology through text, audio, graphics and video in today’s digital ecosystem.
- Discuss the tension between the media and politicians in disseminating information to voters.
- Write text for digital content that is optimized for the platform and audience.
- Quickly shoot and edit video following professional media techniques.
- Develop digital graphics and landing pages.
- Analyze metrics and revise campaign content to achieve its purpose for the audience.
- Produce audio content following professional media production standards.
- Manage a social media campaign using available online tools and methods.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to create a tangible digital campaign that includes the production of digital content. They will also be expected to attend 80% of classes and catch up on any class they miss through collaboration with other students. This class is both very practical and theoretical. As such class discussion and critical reflection will go hand-in-hand with making real media content. Campaigns are a team effort and as such positive teamwork will be expected during exercises and assessment.

Evaluation and Grading

We want to make the grading more than just an academic evaluation exercise. So we are happy to discuss individual projects so long as they conform to our criteria which we will discuss in Week 1. The weighting of the five assignments will be as follows. Each student will be asked to select a cause for which each assignment will be based on.

| Assignment | Learning Objective(s) Addressed | Due Date | Weight |
|--|--|----------|--------|
| <p>Social Media Content Calendar. Submit a week of planned social content for your campaign that adheres to best practices. Include a one-page summary that explains what you are trying to achieve with your posts and which key content areas you believe are essential to cover.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write text for digital content that is optimized for the platform and audience. • Conceptualize a social media campaign using available online tools and methods. | June 6 | 15% |

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| <p>Video Campaign. Submit a video that follows the shooting and editing conventions discussed in Weeks 3 and 4 on a key message within your campaign. The video should be accompanied by an 800-word summary that analyzes how the techniques you have adopted support your campaign and how they appeal to your audience.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly shoot and edit video following professional media techniques. | June 20 | 30% |
| <p>Graphics Campaign. Submit 3 creative approaches for your campaign that are illustrated by a social post, a banner ad, and a landing page. Design mockups should be accompanied by a one-page summary that explains the rationale behind each approach how it achieves your campaign objectives.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop digital graphics and landing pages. | June 27 | 30% |
| <p>Campaign Strategy. Submit a 1500-word paper that describes your campaign and explains how it achieves key objectives, drawing on knowledge you have learned this semester. Include a summary of the video and graphics you created and how they fit into the campaign.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualize a social media campaign using available online tools and methods. | July 18 | 15% |
| <p>Presentation. Conduct a digital content audit of a 2020 presidential candidate and present your analysis in class on Week 10. Outline the strategic recommendations you would make to the candidate to improve their digital content, and provide an example of a</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically analyze digital content and provide strategic recommendations for improvement. | July 25 | 10% |

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| video, audio spot, landing page, or series of static graphics that illustrate your approach. Defend your ideas to the class by fielding questions from other students. | | | |
| 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 that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials

A reading list will be provided to students during the first class.

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.

Class Date: 23 May - Week 1 (Jonathan to teach)

Introduction to the Semester

The first class will include an introduction to the semester and discussion on media psychology, how media has evolved in terms of its dynamics and influence on voters, and the tension between politicians and journalists when it comes to influencing public opinion.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Discuss how media works to convey information in terms of cognitive psychology through text, audio, graphics and video in today's digital ecosystem.
- Discuss the tension between the media and politicians in disseminating information to voters.

Class Date: 30 May - Week 2 (Alex to teach)

Writing Content for Digital Media

This class will explore the fundamentals of digital content creation from identifying a target audience to testing and optimizing a campaign, examining best practices for writing content for digital ads, email newsletters, and social media. It will explore how to strategically use each platform for specific audiences and how to define an organization's content universe.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Write text for digital content that is optimized for the platform and audience.
- Describe the digital content creation workflow.

Class Date: 6 June - Week 3 (Jonathan to teach)

Video #1 - Shooting Engaging Video Content for Different Platforms

This class will explore how to quickly plan and shoot focused video content for different platforms and make it dynamic, so it engages audiences. It looks at a video production workflow to speed up production, how to frame shots so they are engaging and how to plan pictures to tell a visual story. And how to craft content, drawing on the unique properties of video as a communication modality.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Plan a video message for a social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram or YouTube.
- Shoot engaging video using a cell phone that follow traditional TV production values.
- Describe how to make the best of video as a communication modality to convey a message.

Class Date: 13 June - Week 4 (Jonathan to teach)

Video #2 - Editing Video Efficiently to Look Polished and Professional

This class will examine key video editing techniques that enhance the visual quality of video messages. It will look at a video editing workflow that ensures video content flows editorially, is accurate and follow general principles of visual grammar used in professional production. It will also look at critical administrative practices that speed up the video editing process.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Edit a message for social media such as Facebook, Instagram or YouTube that looks polished and flows following continuity editing principles.
- Describe key principles of continuity editing.
- Discuss critical administrative steps to speed up the editing process.

Class Date: June 20 - Week 5 (Alex to teach)

Developing Digital Graphics and Landing Pages

This class explores key aspects of graphic design including typography, color theory, the golden ratio in graphic design, image selection and designing social media graphics using accessible design tools. It examines current trends in political and corporate branding and marketing.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Describe key decisions for graphic design including typography, color selection and layout.
- Discuss current trends in digital branding and marketing.

Class Date: June 27 - Week 6 (Alex to teach)

Digital Analytics and Content Revision

This class looks at why metrics are critical when designing social media campaigns. It examines which metrics to analyze, how to interpret them, and how to use real-time feedback to revise content so that it resonates with the target audience.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Explain the importance of analyzing metrics in digital campaigns.
- Discuss which metrics to analyze and how.
- Discuss how to revise content based on real-time feedback.

Class Date: July 4 - Week 7 (Self-Study)

There is no class this week, due to the July 4 public holiday.

Class Date: July 11 - Week 8 (Jonathan to teach)

Audio Production Skills

This class will explore how to create dynamic audio podcasts as a way of creating and supporting a narrative. It will explore the key tools of audio, audio writing conventions, and basic digital production process for recording and producing audio content is quick and easy to understand.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Plan and produce a short audio podcast using digital production techniques
- Write a podcast script following conventions of writing for the ear.

Class Date: July 18 - Week 9 (Alex to teach)

Drawing It All Together

This class will draw together all the knowledge and skills developed throughout the semester in an interactive exercise that emphasizes key aspects of project management. Students will be assigned a campaign scenario and must work efficiently as a team to produce content for various digital platforms using text, graphics, audio and video.

Class Learning Objective(s):

- Strategically develop creative assets for a digital campaign.

Class Date: July 25 - Week 10 (Jonathan & Alex to teach)

Topic and Content Covered: Final Presentations

Each student will conduct a digital content audit of a 2020 presidential candidate and present their analysis in class. Students will outline the strategic recommendations they would make to the candidate to improve their digital content, and provide an example of a video, audio podcast, landing page, or series of static graphics that illustrate their approach. Each presenter will defend their ideas to the class by fielding questions from other students.

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.