The Graduate School of Political Management
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

MPS in Political Management
Spring 2021
2/1/2021-4/12/2021

Course Name
Applied Pol. Communications - PMGT 6402.10

Monday/7:10pm
Online

Instructor: Evan Tracey, S.V.P. 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 include evaluating new technologies for partnerships to assist NMI's clients in launching measures and optimizing the most efficient communications campaigns possible.

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), and has more than two decades of experience building successful businesses in the political and public affairs, advertising, and research industry. 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 in political trends and issue media as CNN's on-air media consultant. Mr. Tracey was a featured speaker and lecturer at the Vicente Fox Center, Harvard's Kennedy School, and over 100 other political and advocacy media forums.

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. 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 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
If you need to speak with Mr. Tracey for any reason, please email him to set up a time. He will respond with some options as soon as possible.

Blackboard Site
A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site frequently 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.

The course will meet on Mondays online at 7:10 on its scheduled meeting days via Blackboard /WebEx.

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." Copying information and pasting it into a paper without a quotation and citation is an act of plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. For the first offense, the student will receive an "F" for the assignment and formal charges will be filed with the Office of Academic Integrity. For the second offense, charges will again be filed and the student will receive an "F" for the final course grade. Penalties for academic dishonesty are not negotiable. You will not be offered a "do-over" or resubmission. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

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.

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/.

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, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit https://haven.gwu.edu/.

Technology Requirements
It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the Technical Requirements and Support web page. If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the IT Support website. GW is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. The following links provide more information about the accessibility of technologies that may be used in this course (delete all not needed):
- Blackboard accessibility
- Microsoft Office accessibility
- Adobe accessibility
- Vimeo accessibility
- YouTube accessibility
- VoiceThread accessibility
- Webex accessibility

If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact your instructor. You may also explore the Disability Support Services website (see above).

Technology Expectations
Regarding technology skills, you should be able to (delete all not needed):
- Create documents and presentation slides
- Use a webcam and microphone
- Use a digital camera or scanner
- Upload files, including recordings and images
- Be open to learning and registering for new technologies
- Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
- Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology

If you have any problems with the technology expectations in this course, please contact your instructor.

Safety and Security

- **In an emergency**: call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or call 911
- **For situation-specific actions**: review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)
- **In an active violence situation**: [Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out](#)
- **Stay informed**: review [notification tools for staying informed during emergency and safety related situations](#)

Attendance Policy
You are expected to attend **all** classes and turn in assignments on the dates on 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

Online Classroom Conduct Policy
You should behave in class as if you are in a professional setting. Unless you are having connection difficulties, you are expected to activate your camera and to be present, attentive, and engaged during online course meetings. Please do not attempt to multitask, as it is almost impossible to read something while simultaneously listening to something else.

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation
Over the course of the semester, students will spend approximately two hours per week in online class meetings (synchronous learning), plus another hour engaged in asynchronous instructional learning activities (done weekly on one's own time). In addition to these required asynchronous and synchronous activities, reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 8 ¼ hours per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 30 hours in instructional time (asynchronous and synchronous) and 82.5 hours preparing for class.

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

Dr. Todd Belt
Director, Political Management Program
tbelt@gwu.edu | 202-994-4363

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.

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.

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 perspective 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 (online) 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 electoral 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
Intro to Messaging	Baseline political writing assignment	Week 2	5%
Political Comms Strategy Writing	Strategy Framing and Writing. Learn to write like a Comms Pro. Make your case both internally (campaign management) and externally (press and donors)	TBD	10%
Introduction to your Final Exam Assignment /Test 3	Situation Analysis for Your Final Project, learn to zero in on	TBD	15%

	communication planning, identify goals and specific tactics		
Final Exam	Written a communication strategy with the specific elements	Week 10	60%
Attendance and Participation	Weekly		10%
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 (I will likely assign an additional book at or before our 1ˢᵗ class)

The Responsive Chord,

By Tony Schwartz

So You Think You Want to Run for Congress

By George Franklin

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

Inside Campaigns, Elections through the Eyes of Political Professionals

By William J Feltus, Kenneth M Goldstein, Matthew Dallek

Losers

By Michael Lewis

The Great Revolt

By Selena Zito and Brad Todd

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials:

The instructor will be posting articles to Blackboard daily that should be read and reviewed. Also, please read political blogs and political new websites weekly

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
Week 1

Topic and Content Covered:

Building Blocks of your Communications Strategy & Message Development:

What is Applied Political Communications? Where and how does your communications and campaign strategy intersect?

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

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

  - How and when to enter the race.
  - Announcing a campaign
  - Develop the stump speech
  - Social Assets
  - The Candidate rollout
  - Communications efforts during inspection time (Pre and Post Announcement)
  - Surfacing Issues to hit later

Reading Due Today: Chapter 1-9

So You think You Want to Run for Congress

By George Franklin

Assignment(s) Due Today:

None

Class Date
Week 2

Topic and Content Covered:

Thinking about the Brand – Cornflakes vs. Candidates, what is the difference, what is the same, why think about candidates as products?

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Why Branding matters
- Corporate vs. Political Branding, hint don't look at Coke and Pepsi
- The building, maintaining, and defending your brand
- The Party Brand vs. The Candidate Brand
- Social media, branding, and social awareness
- Brands change with user experience, and the death of a brand
- Hispanic and Ethnic Targeting and the Brand

Reading Due Today: Chapter 10-15

So You Think You Want to Run for Congress

By George Franklin

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Week one writing assignment

**Class Date
Week 3**

Topic and Content Covered:

Campaign Content, We are all creators now, so embrace this. Communication must think about content and why and how to deploy it.

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- The power of image and words and how not to misuse this power
- Digital content vs. traditional content, how to
- Emotion, storytelling, and other ways to get your content to stick
- Content production
- Content placement and media channels
- Let the voter in with content
- Do's and don't

Reading Due Today: Pg 1-52

The Responsive Chord,

By Tony Schwartz

Assignment(s) Due Today:

TBD

Class Date
Week 4

Topic and Content Covered:

Media Consumption and Delivery, who is watching what, where.   And why it matters

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- Understand the communications ecosystem
- Budgeting for media
- Know how are your voters consuming media and the data to prove it
- Using your content for maximum eyeballs and impact
- Syncing the content with the distribution channels
- What's the role of social & digital media anyway
- Storytelling with content

Reading Due Today: Pg 1-52

The Responsive Chord, Second Edition

By Tony Schwartz

Assignment(s) Due Today:

TBD
Class Date
Week 5

Topic and Content Covered:

Elements of your communication plan & building your communication model

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

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

Reading Due Today: Pg 53-131

The Responsive Chord, Second Edition

By Tony Schwartz

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Class Date
Week 6

Topic and Content Covered:

Using the Campaign Press Shop

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- What is the Press Now
- 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 a journalist
- Media Training And Preparing Materials
- Can you Go Live

Reading Due Today:

TBD

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Class Date
Week 7

Topic and Content Covered:

Going Negative, when and how to attack and what to do when you are the target

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
- Introducing and driving a negative message
- Figuring our how to go negative, breaking the link
- 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:

TBD

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Class Date
Week 8

Topic and Content Covered:

Closing out the campaign, making a closing argument

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:

TBD

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Class Date
Week 9

Topic and Content Covered:

Comms Timing and Tactics

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:

Class Date

Week 10

Topic and Content Covered:

Crisis management

This is the end, final thoughts

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

- **We do crisis 24/7; this is a skill that transfers from political campaigns to corporate world**
- **How comms teams helps when a crisis hits your campaign or your oppenants**
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Reading Due Today:

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Final Project

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.