

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Semester Fall 2021

Class start/end date: 09/27-12/10

Course Name: Targeting and Voter Contact

Course Number: PMGT 6440.80

Credits: 3

Instructor Information

Instructor

Jim Green

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202) 495-1125

Email Address: greenjd@gwmail.gwu.edu

Communication

Email is the best way to communicate with me, and you can expect a response within 24 hours. If you need to call, please do so before 8 p.m. I will be available before and after class to answer any questions.

Expectation and Responsibilities

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 [GWU Blackboard](#). Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course closes. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or [IT Blackboard web page](#).

Late Policy

I expect every assignment to be turned in on time; for every day an assignment is late, your grade for the assignment will drop by one letter.

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 <https://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 <http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW’s Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information call 202-994-5300 or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services website](#).

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/>.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is in Gelman Library at 2130 H St NW in Suite 221 and they can be reached at 202-994-3765 or via email at gwriter@gwu.edu. You can [schedule writing center appointments](#), both in-person or by phone, in advance. Daytime and evening hours are available. Check for this semester's hours at the [writing center contact page](#). The Writing Center offers summer hours.

GWU Libraries

Off campus students have full access to all of the research resources, services, and assistance that the library offers. The GW community has access to 500+ online subscription databases and to millions of items, electronic and print, in the library catalog. Off-campus students even have additional privileges because the library will FedEx print materials to your home. For more information visit the [GW Libraries homepage](#). Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or [contact someone at the library](#) to answer any

questions. For questions beyond “Do you have this book/article?” and “How do I login?” use the website mentioned to make a research consultation appointment with a librarian. Librarians are there to guide students through any aspect of the research process, from selecting and narrowing a topic, crafting a research strategy to citation management

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](#)

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

Students must notify faculty as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the student must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester that they are enrolled in the course.

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. Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous always.
- Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let’s give the benefit of the doubt.
- If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it if it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.
- When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
- Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

Your instructor reserves the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate for the discussion forum, blog, or wiki without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

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](#)
- [Zoom 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.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact [Disability Support Services](#) if you need additional accommodations for accessing electronic course materials.

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. The Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 10) governs the rights attributed to owners of copyrighted work. Under certain circumstances, educational institutions may provide copies of copyrighted works to students. The copies may not be copied nor used for any other purpose besides private study, scholarship, or research. Users should not provide electronic copies of any materials provided on this course's Blackboard site to unauthorized users. If a user fails to comply with Fair Use restrictions, he/she may be held liable for copyright infringement. No further transmission or electronic distribution is permitted.

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:

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 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

Is big data the panacea for today’s electoral challenges? Students will learn how to use big data to target voters in electoral and issue advocacy campaigns, learning how to shape communications to a target universe. This course will focus on three areas: email list building, persuasion and turnout. For each of

these topics, students will learn how to pull lists from the voter file, manage them in Excel and identify the best mediums to reach a target universe.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Understand the main strategies and tactics of campaigns, paying close attention to how targeting and analytics can further those actions.
2. Understand how polling dictates messaging, persuasion and outreach.
3. Understand how voter contact impacts on-the-ground campaign decision-making.
4. Appreciate the uniqueness of a presidential campaign and understand the impact of the Electoral College on campaign decisions.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on the following:

- **Weekly assignments: 25%**
During various classes (announced in advance), students will complete partnered computer assignments utilizing the voter file. One student will be in Excel while his/her partner will be using Word to document their work and findings.
- **Three short reaction memos: 25%**
Each student will write three (3) reaction memos based on select weekly readings. These memos should be between (1500-2000) words in length and will be due at the beginning of class. Students should provide a detailed critical analysis and personal perspective on the compelling arguments found within the weekly readings.
- **Final presentation: 35%**
As a final presentation, students will have to develop and present a campaign plan showing an allocation of resources. In other words, students will need to show where and how the campaign's money is being spent based on their base and persuasion universes.

This final presentation will consist of three (3) parts: a (1500) word written memo outlining the proposed plan of action (worth 15%), an excel worksheet outlining your budget allocations across channel (worth 5%) and a PowerPoint presentation (worth 15%) that each student will use to defend their thoughts/perspectives in front of their peers and some of our guest speakers. Final memos will be due on Monday, December 6^h, and presentations will take place on Monday, December 6th and Wednesday, December 8th. These presentations should be no more than 15 minutes in length and after you present, I will open the floor to discussion and questions.

- **Discussion Board: 15%**
I expect students to come prepared to speak about the assigned readings and topics of the week. Additionally, it will be important that students stay up to speed on current political issues and trends, especially as they relate to 2022 Midterms.

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 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

There will be one textbook required for this class, and the remainder of assigned readings will come from current and relevant articles, clippings and broadcast segments.

Hersh, Eitan D. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*

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.

September 27th

Week 1

- Topic and Content Covered: Intro to micro-targeting and the voter file
- Readings Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Introduction-Chapter 2 (pages 1-43)
 - Sides, John. 2015. “*The real story about data*” (available on Blackboard)
- Guest Speaker: Paul Westcott, Vice President, [L2](#)

October 4th

Week 2

- Topic and Content Covered: Why don't campaigns listen to their pollsters?
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapters 3 (pages 44-65)
- Guest Speaker: Stefan Hankins, President, [Lincoln Park Strategies](#)
- In-class Assignment: Analyze polling data

October 11th

Week 3

- Topic and Content Covered: Is direct mail still effective?
- Assignment Due Today:
 - First Reaction Paper – Do the Democrats hold on to the House and Senate?
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter 4 (pages -66-87)
- Guest Speaker: Joe Lestingi, Partner, [CampaignXCo](#)
- In-class Assignment: Create a persuasion direct mail universe

October 18th

Week 4

- Topic and Content Covered: TV – A campaign's biggest expenditure
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter 5 (pages 88-122)
- Guest Speaker: Raghu Devaguptapu, Partner [Left Hook Comms](#)
- In-class Assignment: Create a persuasion TV universe for both broadcast and cable

October 25th

Week 5

- Topic and Content Covered: Can digital move poll numbers?
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter 6 (pages 123-140)
- Guest Speaker: Jackie Huelbig, Account Lead, Candidates & Causes, [Centro](#)
- In-class Assignment: Create a digital advertising plan in Excel hitting your base and persuasion universes

November 1st

Week 6

- Topic and Content Covered: Why email is still king?
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter 7 (pages 141-167)
- Guest Speaker: Stephen Solomon CEO, [Break Something](#)
- In-class Assignment: Draft a fundraising email to your base and persuasion universes

November 8th

Week 7

- Topic and Content Covered: Modeling the voter file
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter 8 (pages 168-195)
- Guest Speaker: Tim Teehan, Vice President of Public Affairs, [Infogroup](#)
- In-class Assignment: TBD

November 15th

Week 8

- Topic and Content Covered: Analyzing and manipulating data
- Assignment Due Today:
 - Second Reaction Paper – How big of an impact with Trump hold over the midterms?
- Reading Due Today:
 - Hacking the Electorate – Chapter9 (pages 196--219)
- Guest Speaker: Brad Lippman, Chief of Staff, [Catalist](#)

November 22nd

- No class due to Thanksgiving Week

December 6TH

Week 10

- **FINAL PRESENTATIONS** – written memos due on Monday, December 6th; presentations will be spread over Monday and Wednesday's (December 8th) classes.

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