M.P.S. in Political Management
Fall 2014

Special Topics: Red vs. Blue: History as Prelude to Today’s Politics
PMGT 6490.10
3 Credits
Thursday, 7:10 – 9:40 pm

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Matthew Dallek, Ph.D.

Contact Information
Mdallek@gwu.edu
202-302-1794

Communication
The best way to reach me is email. You can also make an appointment to meet with me before or after class or during office hours.

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://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html.
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 www.gwu.edu/~dss.

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 basement of the Marvin Center 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
Attendance is mandatory for this class. Any individual unable attend class should email me prior to the beginning of that class. Repeated absences will be considered in your final grade.

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
Director, Political Management Program
larabrown@gwu.edu | 202-994-4545

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

Political Management Program Objectives
1. Assess a political environment, develop a strategy to achieve specified goals within that environment, and act to carry out that strategy through a campaign.
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills.
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize a campaign.
4. Find, engage, and motivate the right people – leaders, professional colleagues, and citizens – to join and contribute to a campaign.
5. Address the recurring dilemmas of political life in a manner that upholds ethical standards as they practice the profession.

Course Description and Overview

At the 2004 Democratic convention, Barack Obama famously said:

Now even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us, the spin masters and negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of anything goes. Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America; there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. The pundits, the pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue states: red states for Republicans, blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states. We coach little league in the blue states and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the red states. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq, and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq. We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.

The so-called “red-blue” divide in the United States appears to have worsened since Obama issued this challenge. Democrats and Republicans have become ideologically purer and more cohesive, analysts repeatedly tell us. Each side, the conventional wisdom holds, solicits support from its base while social media has created a Twitter-happy news cycle that features a non-stop stream of personal attacks and counter-strikes. Our political leaders, we are further told, routinely prioritize partisan gain over common-sense legislating while each party swiftly, brutally excommunicates anybody who dares to seek common ground with the other side. The system is “broken,” commentators grimly warn.

This seminar seeks to unpack some of the recent historical forces that have led to this supposedly growing level of partisan rancor—and it asks whether or not we are more divided (and more dysfunctional) now than at any time since the 1960s. This course examines how such forces as demographics, social issues including race and gender, Congressional reforms, the shifting character of campaigns and elections, the advent of social media, and grassroots activism have divided the country into Red and Blue states, with little hope for bipartisan agreement. Equally important, the course asks you to think more deeply about how your own goals, passions, and ideals fit into this historical continuum. By viewing history as a prelude to today’s politics, this course tries to expose you to the fundamental issues affecting our political system while sharpening your campaign and communication skills and giving you more tools so you can have a positive impact on public affairs. By learning to see tough controversies from multiple perspectives, it is hoped that you will be able to understand what if any steps can and should be taken to overcome the Red-Blue divide in modern America.
Course Learning Objectives

1. Provide historical context to understand the trajectory of modern American politics.
2. See tough political issues from multiple perspectives, so you can better persuade opponents of your point of view.
3. Devise a series of inventive political reforms to strengthen the political process in ways that are relevant to your own career goals, ideals, and values.
4. Sharpen communication and campaign skills, crafting a campaign plan and implementing it in a simulated classroom environment.
5. See your own careers through an historical lens, shedding light on where you are and how you hope you will affect the political process in the years ahead.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to participate in class discussion, complete assignments on time, and finish assigned readings before class when due. There are seven written assignments—four reflections and three simulations:

Simulations: Overcoming Red-Blue Divisions

Simulation I:

Write a proposal of no more than 750 words explaining how you would mount a grassroots campaign to convince voters of a “Red” or “Blue” state to adopt a social reform on a tough issue such as guns, abortion, LGBT rights, etc., at odds with the majority position held by most residents. In other words, if you choose to campaign on the abortion issue in relatively liberal California, your proposal must explain how your campaign will persuade voters to support greater abortion restrictions in ways consistent with people’s values and beliefs. To take another example, if you wish to propose a campaign on gun control in a fairly conservative state such as Georgia, your proposal should take stock of residents’ views and seek to persuade voters that modest gun restrictions are consistent with the moral values and social beliefs of most Georgians.

Simulation II:

President Obama has just announced that the United States has used a drone strike to kill an American citizen, who was an alleged terrorist fighting with ISIS on the battlefield in Iraq. The strike, however, has also killed some civilians including children, and footage of the attack has gone viral on Youtube, causing outrage across the United States. The ACLU and Sen. Rand Paul are criticizing the president for using drones to kill an American, while some conservative Republicans are faulting him for not using drones and other military assets more aggressively to target terrorists in Iraq and Syria, as the wars there continue to spin out of control.

Option A: Write a speech (one-page), a press release (half-page), a Facebook announcement about a rally being held in support of the White House, and a Tweet that seek to mollify the
critics and defend the president’s action as consistent with American values and national security principles.

Option B: Write a speech (one-page), a press release (half-page), a Facebook announcement about a rally in support of your cause, and a Tweet that offer not just a critique (from either the ACLU or the GOP’s vantage point) of the president’s actions but also an alternative path that you argue is more consistent with national values and interests. Your statements should offer a serious effort to win support from reasonable people on all sides of the issue without sacrificing the support of your core supporters.

Simulation III:
July 2016: Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton have secured their party’s presidential nominations. You will be asked to write a press release in class based on one of two scenarios provided to you in class.

One-Page Reflections

In addition to these simulations, you must write a series of one-page reflections addressing the following issues: 1) Explain how an historical event or a past experience has affected your views, goals, ideals, or professional aspirations. 2) Explain how Hillary Clinton or Jeb Bush (choose one) should seek to win support on the immigration issue from their respective political opponents amid the 2016 presidential campaign. 3) Recommend a specific strategy to a political leader of your choice for surmounting some of the intense partisanship that has shaped congressional politics. More information about each of these assignments will be provided during section discussion.

The grading breakdown is as follows:
Class Participation: 20%
Simulation I: 20%
Simulation II: 20%
Simulation III: 10%
Reflection I: 10%
Reflection II: 10%
Reflection III: 10%

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100 Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93 Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89 Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86 Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a</td>
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“B” is viewed as unacceptable.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
<td>Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
<td>Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug. 28: *Introduction: The Red-Blue Divide in 2014*

Pew’s recent survey of political typology has a self-assessment tool that puts Americans into one of eight categories. Please take this survey and identify your own political typology. [http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/](http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/)


Alan Abramowitz, *The Polarized Public: Why American Government is so Dysfunctional* (Excerpts)

Dan Balz, “What’s Left of the Political Center?,” The Washington Post


SECTION I: Sixties and Seventies: Social Roots of Our Political Divisions

*Sept. 4: Race and the Rise of the Republican South*

Kevin Phillips *The Emerging Republican Majority*, Introduction

Richard Nixon, “The Great Silent Majority”

Sept. 11: Gender Rights, the Abortion Debate, and Mobilizing Evangelicals

Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name,” excerpt from The Feminist Mystique

Phyllis Schlafly, The Power of the Positive Woman, Ch. 1

“Falwell” and “Supreme Court” Decision on Roe vs. Wade

Thomas Frank, What’s the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America, Introduction, Chapter 1

Schulman, Ch. 7, “Battle of the Sexes: Women, Men, and the Family”

Section II: The Eighties: The Conservative Counter-Revolution and the Tea Party’s Origins

Sept. 18: “Government Is The Problem”: The Revolt against Big Government

Ronald Reagan, Inauguration Address, 1981

Peggy Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution, Intro., 3-16

David Stockman, The Triumph of Politics, Prologue

Sept. 25: Carter, Mondale, Dukakis: the Failures of Liberalism

E.J. Dionne, Why Americans Hate Politics, Ch. 5

Convention Addresses: Geraldine Ferraro, 1984; Michael Dukakis, 1988; Jesse Jackson, 1988

DLC Platform

Oct. 2: Simulation I
Section III: The Nineties: The Clinton Wars

Oct. 9: Gingrich’s Revolution and the Tangled Roots of Congressional Discontent


Oct. 16: The Politics of Personal Destruction: Scandals, the Internet, and Clinton’s White House


Matt Drudge Address at the Press Club

David Brock, The Republican Noise Machine, Introduction

Bernie Goldberg, Bias, Introduction

Peter Baker, The Breach: Inside the Impeachment and Trial of William Jefferson Clinton, Ch. 1

Robert Bork, Slouching Towards Gomorrah, Ch. 1

Gephardt and Livingston Floor Speeches

Oct. 23: What’s Wrong (and Right) with American Campaigns and Elections


SNL Debates

James Patterson, Restless Giant, The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore, pp. 404-425

Oct. 30: Simulation II

Section IV: Partisanship, Post-9/11

Nov. 6: The 9/11 Attacks and the Elusive Search for National Unity

Ronald Brownstein, The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America, Ch. 8

Nov. 13: Obama’s America: “Hope and Change” and Enduring Partisanship

Haynes Johnson and David Broder, The System, “To Our Readers: A Moment in History”

Obama, 2004 Convention Keynote


Mitt Romney: “I’ll Deliver Recovery, Not Dependency,” Sept. 19, 2012 (Two days after news of his 47 percent comment broke)


Ronald Brownstein, The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America, Ch. 1

Nov. 20: Reforming American Democracy—from the Tea Party to Occupy Wall Street

Jill LePore, “Tea and Sympathy, Who Owns the American Revolution?,” The New Yorker,  
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/05/03/100503fa_fact_lepore?currentPage=all


Dec. 4: Simulation III and Wrapping Up