Political Data and Analytics
Course Number: PMGT 6403.10
3 Credits

Class Day/Time: Mondays, 7:10 to 9:40 p.m.
Class Location: Rome, B104

Instructor
Name: Jeffrey Franklin Osanka, Ph.D.
Email: osanka@gwu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 6-to-7 p.m.

THE COURSE
Description
Data analytics is a critical component of political management. Data drives strategy, targeting, messaging, mobilization, advertising, campaigning, and much more. Political consultants gain a strong competitive advantage in the marketplace by finding meaning in data, and translating that meaning into actionable political strategies. This course puts aspiring political managers on a path to achievement. This class is an introduction to applied political data and analytics: complete with in-depth review and critical investigation of traditional and cutting-edge analytical methods. This introduction focuses on three areas of analytics: data visualization, quantitative methods (counting, sampling, and survey research), and qualitative methods (experiments and focus groups).

Philosophy
- A key learning goal of this course is discerning the client’s perspective. As political managers, we are hired to effectively communicate to our clients. In terms of data analytics, we have a duty to present our clients the best possible information.
- In this course, the Instructor's role is as the Client for each political manager. Students take on roles working for clients of the same or opposite party or faction within a party.
- In the real world, political managers gain data from experience with every client. Periodically, the Instructor may adopt different client personas (based on clients previously encountered).
- "Questioning the Client" database (Blackboard)
  - Everyone in this class deserves equivalent access to information.
  - We'll set up a discussion board on Blackboard to collect this information.
  - Students are on their honor to timely post client-data:
    - Any questions they put to their client and perceived answers received.
    - This applies if you catch the client before/after class or during office hours.
    - This applies even if not reminded "be sure to post that."
- Readings to be completed before each class. Class discussion is informed by this data, even if we don't review it point by point.
- Presentation need not equate to accuracy. Pretty graphics can use false data. Ugly graphics may use true data.
- Presentation does enhance assimilation of data. Clients appreciate a presentation that makes some aspects of the data easier to understand.
Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn to:

- Use data analytics to inform political decision-making.
- Discuss the importance of data analytics in politics.
- Understand the parlance of discussing political data and analytics.
- Explain various research methods and identify similarities/differences between them.
- Spot valid v.s. manipulative uses of data analysis.
- Ask the right questions when presented with data analysis.
- Select and apply various analytical tools and techniques to research problems.
- Identify, collect, analyze and interpret data.
- Plan and execute a political data & analytics research project.
- Communicate the results of your analysis by storytelling: verbally and in writing.

Format

This is an active participation class, taught through a combination of discussion, class activities, lectures, and assignments. The classroom experience will be interactive. Lectures are driven by each week’s learning objectives; content will connect concepts to practice. Discussions will engage students - regardless of whether one raises his or her hand. Students should formulate questions about each week’s topic before and during class and work to contribute substantively to the conversation. Remember: no question is too dumb. Class activities help students apply concepts to real world problems via working in small teams. Assignments allow students to work through exercises that will help them connect data and analytics to political management. Overall, the course is designed to train you to conduct and consume data analytics in the political management context. Participation is an essential component of success in this class, and is critical to making the classroom experience more robust and enjoyable.

Tips to avoid "Data Apprehension"

Some students enter this course believing that it’s going to be all about math and formulas. Others may have a lot of anxiety about understanding data. This may be the first time a student is encountering this topic. This is not a math class. This is a data analytics class designed to give you a broad and applied introduction to concepts that are increasingly prominent in the political management field. So that students get the most out of the class, it’s important to focus on the process of learning. Your approach is to maintain patience, stay motivated, and allocate enough time to prepare for class and complete assignments. Students should feel comfortable asking whatever questions they need to ask in order to understand the material. Again, the only dumb question is the one unasked. This challenging course is designed to motivate, engage, interest, and push each political manager to think outside the box.

Course Deliverables

Class grades are determined on the following basis:

- 5 Assignments: 50%
- Project Presentation: 40% (Infographic report: 20% + Data-driven Story: 20%)
- Class Participation: 10%

TEXTBOOK & READINGS (order online)

- Articles posted on Blackboard.
Grading

The following is the grading scale for GSPM courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 94-100</td>
<td>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- 90-93</td>
<td>Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ 87-89</td>
<td>Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 83-86</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- 80-82</td>
<td>You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ 77-79</td>
<td>Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 73-76</td>
<td>Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
<td>Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Below 70</td>
<td>Unacceptable performance or inability to submit the assignment.</td>
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LECTURE SCHEDULE

8/31/15: Introduction to Political Data & Analytics

You will learn
- The purpose of the course.
- Begin to understand the client-manager relationship.
- The meaning of political data and analytics.
- Designing a survey requires first figuring out:
  - What does the client want to know?
  - What does the client need to know?
- How to compose questions that produce accurate data.
- How to edit questions in different ways that may produce different data.

9/7/15: Labor Day holiday -- no class today

9/14/15: Field Work and Primary Research

You will learn
- How to travel into the field to do primary research.
- How to work within a team to make data decisions.
- How do we discern the data that is all around us?
- How do we organize that data?
- Discerning the story behind your data.
- Telling the story that reveals your data.

Readings (always read before class time)
- Articles posted on Blackboard
9/21/15: The Basics of Political Analysis

You will learn
- What are the different types of data: temporal, geographic, cross sectional?
- How is data constructed?
- Where do I find data?
- How do I define a research problem?
- How do I build, manage, and clean data?
- How do I approach a data research project?

Readings
- Political Analysis, chapter 1-2

Assignment
- Assignment #1 due.

9/28/15: Foundations of Data Visualization

You will learn
- The meaning of data visualization.
- The types of data visualizations.
- The ways people process visual information.
- The tools and techniques of data visualization.
- The guidelines for visualizing and presenting information.
- The importance of storytelling in data visualization.

Readings
- Articles posted on Blackboard

Assignment
- Assignment #2 due.

10/5/15: Approaching Quantitative Analysis

You will learn
- Differences between proposing explanations, framing hypotheses, and making comparisons.
- What the difference is between an independent and dependent variable?
- How to write a hypothesis that states relationships between variables.
- How to describe relationships and compare variables.
- Make controlled comparisons.
- Build and visualize cross tabulations.

Readings
- Political Analysis, chapters 3 - 5

10/12/15: Statistical Inference & Sampling

You will learn
- Make controlled comparisons.
- Build and visualize cross tabulations.

Readings
- Political Analysis, chapter 6

Assignment
- Assignment #3 due.
10/26/15: Communicating Data Analysis
You will learn
• How to write about data.
• How to develop a data report.
• How to tell a data story.
• Checking your accuracy by asking others.
Readings
• Articles posted on Blackboard.

11/2/15: Analyzing Survey Data
You will learn
• How to approach analyzing survey data.
• What are the various components of survey data: questions, coding, codebooks, and data sets?
• Conducting statistical procedures to test relationships.
Readings
• Political Analysis, chapters 5 & 7.

11/9/15: Analyzing Census Data
You will learn
• The ins and outs of analyzing census data, e.g. determining what to look at, getting data, and visualizing data.
Readings
• Articles posted on Blackboard.
Assignment
• Assignment #4 due.

11/16/15: Focus Groups
You will learn
• What is focus group methodology and when should it be used?
• What are the advantages and limitations of focus groups?
• How focus groups should be conducted and their results analyzed.
Readings
• Articles posted on Blackboard
Class Activity
• Run a Focus Group
Assignment
• Assignment #5 due.

11/23/15: Caucus simulation & discussion of the upcoming Iowa and Nevada caucuses
You will learn
• How American voters go into their precincts and make group decisions.
• What is a caucus?
• What is a precinct?
• How are Delegates and Alternates selected to go to their party's Convention?

11/30/15: Final Questions for the Client & meeting time for Group aspects of Project Presentations

12/7/15: Project Presentations (plan on these going until 10:40pm; making up for Labor Day)
BASIC INFORMATION

Communication
Please contact your Client (Instructor) by e-mail; I will respond within 24 hours. For in-person meetings, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment.

Blackboard
Blackboard is the central resource for students to access readings, lectures, blog, and discussion boards. Students can also submit papers, chat, check grades, and more. Access Blackboard by clicking: https://blackboard.gwu.edu. If you need help with Blackboard, please contact tech support at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Student Responsibility Statement
Student responsibility entails taking an active role in learning and being accountable for one’s academic success. Students must demonstrate academic integrity, attendance, and participation. They must dedicate sufficient time to prepare for class and complete assignments that demonstrate on-time, quality work. Students should manage their time so as to balance their professional, educational, and personal responsibilities. Students should avoid making excuses for their behavior. They should communicate in a careful and respectful manner with the professor and their classmates, and comply with class and university policies and procedures. Moreover, students should utilize college resources and seek help when needed.

Professor Responsibility Statement
The professor is responsible for promoting academic standards in the classroom and the curriculum. He will create an atmosphere of mutual respect for reasoned opinions. The professor will not tolerate uncivil behavior. He will deliver engaging lectures with a focus on quality, and will communicate any schedule changes or updates to the syllabus in a timely fashion. The professor will hold regular office hours, and respond to emails within 24-hours. He will ensure that the evaluation of each student reflects the true merit of their performance, and will return graded work within one week of students handing it in.

Lecture Evaluation
Providing feedback to the professor is essential to helping make this course productive and successful. In order to gauge the effectiveness of each lecture, students will complete a brief feedback form at the end of each class. In addition, students should feel free to talk to the professor about their thoughts on the course. If students are having problems with the class, please contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss.

Course Evaluation
At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the class through GW’s online course evaluation system.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Handing in Work
Students must do two things to get credit for their work. (1) Upload papers to Blackboard Safe Assign prior to the due date. (2) Turn in a hard copy of the assignment at the beginning of class on its due date. The professor does not accept assignments via email. Nor should students leave assignments with the GSPM office.
Late Assignments
For each day that an assignment is late, it will be marked down one grade-level (e.g., from a B to a B-). An assignment that is one full week late will be counted as an "F." When handing in a late assignment, please do the following. 1) Upload the assignment to safe assign. This will stop the late deduction, and 2) bring a hard-copy of the assignment to the next class. If a student believes he/she has a legitimate "emergency" that makes it so that he/she will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please notify the professor as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Attendance
**Attending class is required.** If a student has a scheduling conflict, please contact the professor as soon as he/she is aware of the issue. Otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused and it will negatively count against your participation grade. **Note: 4 or more class absences during the semester will result in a failing class participation grade.**

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](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. Please also be sure to notify the professor of you disability, should you require accommodations. Additional information is available at [www.gwu.edu/~dss](http://www.gwu.edu/~dss).

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class
If we experience an emergency during class, we will stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave, we will meet at the lobby level of the Media & Public Affairs Building (805 21st Street, NW) 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/](http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/).

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 strictly forbidden.