

**The Graduate School
of Political Management**

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Fall 2016

Aug 29 – Dec 12

Influencing the Media

PMGT 6464.10

3 Credits

Monday/ 7:10-9:40pm

Phillips 414B

Lindsay Ellenbogen

I'm a communications professional with experience serving public figures in government, private companies and non-profit organizations. My political background includes handling public relations for then-Mayor Mike Bloomberg as his DC spokesperson, a post I also held for a variety of Democrats including former Senator Mary Landrieu. I now run a non-profit and serve on boards in Washington DC and Los Angeles. LinkedIn is a great go-to for the full blurb:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindsay-ellenbogen-b046b731>

An alum of GSPM with 8 years of experience teaching political management in New York and Washington, I am both an instructor and student advocate. To that end, each guest speaker is asked to give you their email and respond to class-related inquiries within a reasonable timeframe. Our class is designed to be dynamic, with a combination of lecture and workshops. We also make every effort to visit newsrooms and newsmakers at their place of business if they cannot join us on campus. Thus, there will be times when the syllabus changes—think of it as a living document, not a tablet carved in stone.

Contact Information

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Communication

I can be reached via email—please expect a response within 24 hours. Please leave a phone number as I may respond via phone. Online and phone office hours on Wednesdays 4-7pm and Fridays 2-4pm unless otherwise noted.

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 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 Whole Foods 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

Students will be expected to attend each class. *MEDIA TRAINING DATES ARE MANDATORY. These are one-time only opportunities and cannot be rescheduled if you miss class.* Final Exam is also MANDATORY and cannot be rescheduled. Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences. If unexpected events cause a student to miss more than 3 classes, the instructor needs to be informed as to the nature of the absence and could reflect in the student’s 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
larambrown@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

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

Through analyzing media coverage of public officials, political campaigns, legislative battles, interest groups, and issues of public policy, students will formulate strategies in an effort to win favorable news coverage for the issue or candidate and for ending a media crisis.

Note: We will have guest speakers throughout the semester. All speakers are TENTATIVE and will be announced prior to class. Speakers may appear in person or via Skype/FaceTime.

Course Learning Objectives

By examining communication strategies and their practical applications, students will learn written and verbal communication skills necessary to devise a public relations campaign on behalf of a candidate, client or cause. While this course will discuss strategy, we will also review the tactical, basic elements of written, verbal and digital/visual political communication.

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend class, participate in regular class discussions and work on in-class group exercises. Students will be expected to do weekly readings, writing assignments and take a final exam. Assignments are due by the next class and will be returned the following week. Students must bring a hard copy to class as well as email assignments.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Written and Verbal Assignments	See Class Schedule	See Class Schedule	5% each for a total of 45%
Class Participation	Analysis, contributions, ideas, readings	Ongoing throughout semester	10%
Final Project	See Class Schedule	Dec 5	25%
Final Exam	Testing skills /knowledge learned	Dec 12	20%
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 late assignments will be not be eligible for an “A” grade.

Required Texts and Materials

Molly Andrews - *Narratives of Political Change*
Peggy Noonan - *On Speaking Well*
Frank Luntz - *Words That Work*
Jay Heinrichs - *Thank You for Arguing*
William Zinsser - *On Writing Well*

AP Stylebook

Various handouts will be provided

NOTE: Make sure you have the AP Stylebook. All assignments should follow AP guidelines.

Class Project Description: You will select an issue or politician for whom you serve as communications director. You are to conduct a media audit, develop communication goals and devise a communications strategy outlining how you will accomplish said goals. You will develop their message and include the tactics you will use to release it. You will include the full political landscape in which you are working (your opposition, counter-argument) and whom you are trying to influence, (your audience(s) and how you will reach them). We will grade this based on writing and analysis. Each student will need to pick a different candidate/issue.

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.

August 29

Welcome and Introductions

A discussion about the upcoming semester and what students will learn from the course. There will be an overview of assignments, readings, in-class exercises, the schedule, final exam and class project.

Case study of a man and a message that turned ugly.

Assignment:

- You are the newly hired communication director for a candidate, cause, or organization. It's a 3-month stint from September 12 to December 12. For whom do you work and why? Write a job description including whom you work for, what your responsibilities are and what the expectations are for your role. ****Please note**-- this choice will carry through to other assignments throughout the semester.**
- Read Andrews 2,4; Luntz 5; Heinrichs 6, 18

Guest Speaker: Martine Charles, President and CEO at M.A.R.C Global Communications and former PR representative for Tour de France winner and US Postal Service Cycling Team Member Tyler Hamilton

September 5 (Labor Day): No Class

September 12

Getting There: Constructing the Narrative

Class will examine politicians, organizations, and issues to determine what their “narrative” is. We will discuss the importance of ‘the story behind’ and the difference between a bio and a narrative.

What is the story you want to tell?

- Narrative answers the question of “who” a person is; how they developed their personal or cultural identity; for issue campaigns, the narrative answers the question “why,” why is the cause necessary, what was the genesis and what is the fight about?
- Tell your story – what are the pitfalls to avoid? Are there holes and if so, how do you fill them?
- Narratives are stories, not resumes or biographies.

Assignment:

- Write a narrative for a candidate or cause and rewrite a narrative for a politician or cause that is not top of mind. Your story should make us care, make us relate and want to write about him/her/it.
- Read “Mayors Against Illegal Guns” editorials, Luntz 1-3

Note: Classes on September 19th and 26th will focus on message development

September 19

Developing an Effective Message

Part I: Listen First, Talk Second, Engage Third

A “message” answers the question, “why should the audience support me?” Our focus is on crafting a message once data is collected and an audience is identified. A message should have six components:

- Balance between the problem and a way forward
- Project Success—the issue is serious and complex, but message needs to be upbeat, communicate that something can be done.
- Ask for support—what clear steps are you asking people to take? What new ideas or solutions do you think should be implemented to make progress on the issue?
- Start narrow to build core support, but must have a broader agenda to appeal to swing voters, middle class, general public. While they are not the targets of the effort, there needs to be a connection between the public policy and something that will benefit them
- Politicians need to feel that they will benefit by doing something on the issue
- Be where the action is. If action is happening on your issue somewhere in your area (or for national campaigns, in the country) that is consistent with the goals of your campaign, you want to be a part of that effort.

Discussion: Case study of Mayors Against Illegal Guns and role-play “Be the Mayor.” What language does the group use to frame the issue? What is the underlying value? Who is the audience?

Assignment: Read Heinrichs 3, 4

Guest Speaker: Arkadi Gerney, former Director, Mayors Against Illegal Guns; now Senior Fellow, Center for American progress (May move to 9/26)

September 26

Developing an Effective Message

Part II: Persuasion

Message is not fact and it's not a list of things you want to accomplish. Message is a rhetorical device that conveys ideas, values and point of view in a way your audience can relate. Your message will be subject to argument. You will have to use various appeals to communicate your message. The most effective messages are persuasive and can operate on different rhetorical levels, particularly in response to an argument.

- Rhetoric: logical, emotional, moral
- Faulty Reasoning: circular, faulty cause and effect, either/or thinking, over-generalizations, faulty emotional appeals
- Developing responses using message and persuasion

Assignment:

- Find a news talk show segment on YouTube relating to your issue/politician—look for the rhetoric and faulty reasoning. Cite examples of each in the segment. Write a response that uses solid reasoning to make a persuasive argument. Find a segment applicable to the person, issue or organization you represent.
- Read Noonan “And So We Begin” section; Heinrichs 12, 14

October 3 – October 10

Message Delivery: Two-Part Class

You now have a message but can you stay on it? What happens if your delivery falls flat—or worse—takes a wrong turn? These two classes will be held at the award-winning Public Relations strategy firm of Qorvis Communications. We will discuss and practice the skill of message delivery. During this class, students will be interviewed on-camera. Student performance will be taped for peer and professional feedback. **Please note: On both dates, class will be held at Qorvis Communications:**

1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 500
Washington DC 20036

It is off the Red Line at either DuPont Circle or Farragut North. It is a 10-15 minute walk from campus. We will gather in the lobby at 7:10pm. An ON-TIME arrival is essential. There is no “make-up” for this class.

- How is a message delivered in an interview? Language, actions, non-verbal communication
- A few of the interview tactics and pointers we will cover:
 - Reporter controls the question, you control the answer
 - What to do when a curveball question comes your way; pivot or punch back
 - Do you ever abandon your message on the spot? How to “bridge” back
 - How to use appropriate word choice for a given situation; catastrophe vs. bump in the road
 - Have you captivated your audience? If not, what tactics can you use?
 - Silence- when to use

In-class Assignment: Participation in media training exercises

October 17

Taking Stock: Undergoing a Media Audit and Setting Communication Goals

The first and second steps of strategic planning—articulating the goal and defining the issue. What is Job 1 for your client/organization/issue?

- Goals: advance an issue? Win an election? Lead an organization? Increase the bottom line? Change public perception?
- Owning a word

How does the media perceive your client/organization/issue?

- What is a media audit? How does it differ from opposition research?
- Why conduct one? Shows perception from the media—how they report on you, what you are saying on the issues and which audience you prioritize. Research and data from polling determines your audience—a media audit helps determine if you are reaching it.
- Tools: Gap analysis vs SWOT

Discussion: Case study of US Senator Mary Landrieu (D-La). How to analyze a client, set goals, develop a strategy

Assignment: Read Luntz 6, Zinsser 1-5

October 24 (University Holiday): No Class

October 31

What is News?

We examine the building blocks of news stories. Why is something news? Who cares about it? What's the point? Understanding what "the media" looks for when reporting news is essential to developing an eye and an ear for it.

- Do you have a target audience?
- Will they care about what you have to say? How will you make them care?
- News stories can be noteworthy because of their WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY or HOW or some combination. Your story will draw interest because of these subjects.

Discussion: We will look at several stories and discuss what about them makes them NEWS

Assignment: You are the editor. Find an article/TV clip (applicable to the person, issue or organization you represent) in print or online that is unusual ... why did this make news? How did people respond? Include the news story and write a paragraph explaining why this piece made it in print or online.

Guest Speaker: John Parkinson, Producer, ABC News White House Unit

November 7

Getting Noticed and Making News: The Tools

The next three classes will focus on ways to communicate the news you wish to make. We will examine how to write a press release, pitch a story and use photographs to tell a story on digital mediums.

The Basic Written Tools and Organization

- Getting Noticed and Making News: The purpose of Press Releases and Media Advisories
 - Elements and format
 - Headlines and Sub-heads
 - Lead paragraphs
 - Quotes
 - Writing the Sound Bite
 - Pertinent Facts
 - Writing for impact
 - When to do an event vs. releasing paper
 - Talking Points
 - Digital platforms: Captions, Tweets and Posts
 - Sample releases, advisories and talking points

Assignment

- Write a press release announcing news your candidate, organization or cause is seeking to make. Write a media advisory for an event your candidate, organization or cause is planning to advance the news announced in said release. What is the headline you want to see? What are the elements of the story the press will be interested in and how can you accommodate them? Keep the visuals in mind...
- Write Tweets based on the news you are announcing. Be prepared to read them aloud in class and we will vote (thumbs up or down) on if you would open a link/ re-Tweet it.

November 14

The Basics of Pitching

Talking to Journalists: Pitches and Guidelines

- Pitching, how to pitch, how not to pitch
- Defining terms: “On/Off the Record”
- Tactics: Exclusive, Leak, Embargo
- Attention grabbing slug lines, boiling the story to 5 words:

Example:

Release headline: Former DC Foster Youth to speak at Dem Convention in Philly

Pitch Slug Line: Most Powerful Woman in the World and Her Foster Youth Mentee

Assignment

- Read Noonan “Soundbites and “Soundbites II”
- Develop a pitch via email. Write the slug line, the pitch text and include the advisory/press release in the body of the email. Use the press release/advisory from November 7 class.

November 21

Visual and Social Communication

Today's society is largely focused on the quickest and fastest way to get information. Photographs, videos and infographics are tools to show—not just tell—what the action is. Today we have more visuals than ever before, available faster than ever before, making everyone exposed a “witness” to the action.

- Is there a specific demographic that uses a certain medium for information? Why?
- In what ways can we effectively target these demographics with quick and informative visuals?
- In what way are photographs appealing? How can you entice someone into clicking on a photograph?
- What makes effective clickbait? For whom?
- News aggregators and whom they target: The Skimm, Yahoo! News, Pulse
- How does voice differ on social media platforms (blog, tweet, post, G+, pin)?

Guest Speaker: Jenna Brayton, former director of digital content creation, The White House

Assignment:

- Tweet, Post & Insta: Create one of each with a photo, caption that moves your message, engages.
- Create a twenty-second or so verbal pitch for a reporter. Be prepared to share your pitch next class. NOTE: Each student must be prepared to pitch a story.

November 28

Understanding the Other Side of the Desk: Reporters

This class will be held at the offices of Roll Call:

77 K Street NE
8th Floor
Washington DC 20002

A review of the relationship between reporter and communications professional

- Establish ground rules and clarify terms
- Trust is key: leaking, confidentiality, accurate, timely information
- Determining who to pitch – and when
- Managing an interview for yourself, the principle
- What to do when it goes wrong
- Case study of poor responses/missteps with reporters.

NOTE: We will “role play” press secretary/journalist with your pitches.

Guest speaker: Jonathan Allen, political columnist, former White House Bureau Chief and New York Times bestselling author.

Assignment:

- Put your journalist hat on and write a story that fits into your communications narrative— For what outlet do you write? Why? Who is the intended audience?

December 5

What is a Crisis? And Reactive Damage Control

****FINAL PAPER DUE****

Danger! Damage Control—What to do the unexpected happens.

Crisis/Emergencies/Scandals -- Guidelines

- Getting the information you need to respond quickly, accurately
- “Be quick, don’t hurry.”
- Thinking fast: killing the story, damage control, rebuttals
- Digging out of a Hole: A good example; a poor example

In-class Assignment: What are some recent political/corporate crises and how would you handle differently? We will analyze and discuss recent examples. Class will break up into teams. Each team will be given a set of facts and a scenario and must develop a communications strategy “on the fly.”

Guest Speaker: Jarrod Bernstein, former Press Secretary, NYC Office of Emergency Management and New York State licensed firefighter

December 12

Papers Due and Final Exam

Exam is THREE PARTS:

Written exam: You will be given a scenario outlining a person or organization with facts and news to be made. You must write a press release, one social media tag/lead/message, and determine your target audience. Be prepared to write where you are sending this release, where you are posting and WHY. You will have 45 minutes to write, print and email release to me.

Verbal exam: Working with the same scenario, you will develop and deliver a pitch for a to-be-determined news outlet, one general news and one specialized publication.

Reading Questions

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.*

****All classes are “off the record” – that is, materials, discussions or photographs cannot be quoted or represented via social media or the press unless otherwise noted.*