BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructors:
John Edgell & George Cecala

Contact Information:
John Edgell : 202-246-8678  (johnredgell@earthlink.net)
George Cecala:  703-405-9394  (gcecala@gmail.com)

Communication:
The best way to contact John and George is through email. Students can expect a response within 24 hours of submitting a request. If urgent, students can also try calling and leaving a message.

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 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 [fill in proximate location] 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. Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences. If unexpected events cause a student to miss more than 2 classes, both instructors need 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.

Course Description and Overview:
Organization, practices, and norms of the major media; media coverage of public officials, political campaigns, legislative battles, interest groups, and issues of public policy. Formulation of strategies for getting favorable news coverage for the issue or candidate and for ending a media crisis.

Course Learning Objectives:
By examining communication strategies and their practical applications, students will learn the skills necessary to shape debates, influence the outcome of public policy campaigns and help change the perception about an issue or individual. Note: While this course will focus on strategy, we will also review the tactical, basic elements of written and verbal 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.

Evaluation and Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>Written/Verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment 1: Narrative</td>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>2/10/2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment 2: Write an Op-ed</td>
<td>Writing an Op-Ed</td>
<td>2/17/2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment 3: One Minute Floor Speech</td>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>2/24/2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment 4: Press Release/Advisory/Talking Points</td>
<td>Reaching out to the Media</td>
<td>3/3/2015</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment 5: Perfect Press Release</td>
<td>Reaching out to the Media</td>
<td>3/17/2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Assignment: Develop a pitch</td>
<td>Reaching out to the Media</td>
<td>3/24/2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade *</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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</thead>
<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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*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

**Required Text and Learning Materials:**
- Peggy Noonan – On Speaking Well
- Frank Luntz – Words That Work
- Jay Heinrichs – Thank You For Arguing
- William Zinsser— On Writing Well
- AP Style Book
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.

**Week 1 – Tuesday, January 13, 2015**

*Welcome and Introductions*

**Main Topics Covered:** What is a spokesperson and what is their role? General Discussion on the types of media, ways to influence the media and shape public perception.

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
A discussion about the upcoming semester and what students will learn from the class. Plus an overview of assignments, readings, in-class exercises, schedule, final exam.

**Assignment:** Read Frank Luntz’s *Words That Work*, Chapters 1-3

**Week 2 – Tuesday, January 20, 2015**

*Taking Stock - Undergoing a Media Audit*

**Main Topics Covered:** Taking an inventory of your tools and getting to know the terrain ahead.

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
How does the media perceive your client/organization/issue? What is a media audit? How does it differ from opposition research? Why conduct one? How do you conduct one? The role of research in understanding public perception (polling, electoral results). Choosing and prioritizing audiences,

**Assignment:** Luntz’s *Words that Work*, Chapters 4-6

**Week 3 – Tuesday, January 27, 2015**

*Moving Ahead: Setting Communications Goals*

**Main Topics Covered:** What are you trying to achieve? Who are you talking to? Having a plan.

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
Owning a word.
Audience – who to capture and how to reach, building a press list

**Assignment:** Read Zinsser’s *On Writing Well*, Chapters 1-5

**Week 4 – Tuesday, February 3, 2015**

**Constructing the Narrative**

**Main Topics Covered:** What’s the story you want to tell?

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

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?
How is a message constructed? Language, actions, non-verbal communication
Using technology to shape external relations

**Assignments:**
1. **Written Assignment (1):** Rewrite a narrative for a politician or issue that is interesting but not top of mind.
2. **Written Assignment (2):** Rewrite a narrative for a politician or issue that is interesting but not top of mind.
3. **Read Noonan’s On Speaking Well: And So We Begin Section (Pages 6-98)**

**Week 5 – Tuesday, February 10, 2015**

**Developing an Effective Message – Part 1**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Learning how to develop a message.

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**

The first and second steps of strategic planning—articulating the goal and defining the issue. A message should have six (6) components:

**Assignment Due Today:** Narratives

**Assignments:**
1. Read *On Speaking Well: Writing Speeches for Other People Section (Pages 101-140)*
2. Read Heinrich’s *Thank You for Arguing: Chapters 1-4*
3. **Written Assignment (2):** You are a press secretary for a Member of Congress and your main local paper called wants you to write an op-ed (no more than 500 words) advocating for or against an issue. Declare your issue and write a draft op-ed.
Week 6 – Tuesday, February 17, 2015

**Developing an Effective Message – Part 2: Persuasion**

*Topic and Content Covered:* Further steps in developing a message - Persuasion

*Learning Objective(s) Addressed:*

**Modes of Persuasion:**
Rhetoric: logical, emotional, moral

**Faulty Reasoning:**
circular, faulty cause and effect, either/or thinking, over-generalizations, faulty emotional appeals

**Pitching vs. Rebutting**

*Assignment Due Today:* Op-eds due today

*Assignment:*
1. Find a news talk show segment on YouTube — look for the rhetoric and faulty reasoning. Cite examples of each in the segment.
2. Watch C-SPAN on YouTube and look for a floor speech delivered by a member of Congress. Cite examples of the rhetoric and/or faulty reasoning used.
3. **Written Assignment (3):** You are a press secretary for a Member of Congress, draft your boss a one-minute floor speech. You will deliver your speech during the first part of the next class.
4. Read Heinrich’s *Thank You for Arguing:* Chapters 11-13, 23

Week 7 – Tuesday, February 24, 2015

**The Basic Written Tools/ Organizing for Success**

*Topic and Content Covered:* Press Releases, Advisories, Talking Points, Q & A’s

*Learning Objective(s) Addressed:*
The purpose of Press Releases and Media Advisories.
When to do an event vs. releasing paper.
Talking Points, Message windows/buckets, Qs and As, Fact Sheets

*Assignment Due Today:* Delivering Your One Minute Floor Speech - Discussion

*Assignments:*
1. **Written Assignment (4):** Write a media advisory, news release and talking points. Use the announcement of a candidacy as the topic for all three. Bring to next class. You will turn these in at the beginning of class.
2. **On Speaking Well:** Section on Presentation (Pages 143 -208)
More Basics /Writing Workshop

Topic and Content Covered: Refining Your News Release

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
Writing News Releases:
Elements and format, Headlines and Sub-heads, Lead paragraphs, Quotes, Writing the Sound Bite, Pertinent Facts. Embargoed? Writing for impact.

Assignment Due Today: We will use your assignment from last class (Press Release/Advisory/Talking Points) during this workshop to show the dos and don’ts of effective communication.

Assignment:
1. Written Assignment (5): Write the “perfect” news release and turn this in at the next class.

NOTE: Make sure you have the AP Style Book. All assignments should follow those guidelines.

Just Give Them a Call: The Basics of Pitching a Story

Topic and Content Covered: Pitching news stories to reporters, writers and producers.

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
The Business of News and How To Make it Yours:
Motivations, Audience
Papers want what readers want? Papers want to sell.
Talking to Journalists: Pitches and Guidelines
Pitching, how to pitch, how not to pitch
Clarification of Terms, “On/Off the Record,” etc.

Use of the Exclusive – A great way to try to control the news and build reporter relationships

Assignment Due Today: You will hand in assignments from previous class (writing a news release) and we will discuss them.

Assignment: Verbal Assignment (1): Create a twenty-second or so pitch for a reporter. Be prepared to share your pitch next class. NOTE: Each student must be prepared to pitch a story.
Week 10 – Tuesday, March 24, 2015

**Understanding the Other Side of the Desk: Reporters**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Interacting with reporters and producers.

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
- 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.

**Assignment Due Today:** We will “role play” press secretary/journalist with your pitches.

**Guest Speaker:** Veteran reporter will be on hand to discuss “the other side”

**Assignment:**
1. **Written Assignment (6):** 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?

Week 11 – Tuesday, March 31, 2015

**You’ve Got News to Make. What platform will you use?**

**Topic and Content Covered:** Different ways you can send messages and selecting a method

**Learning Objective(s) Addressed:**
- How will you deploy your message to reach your audience?
- What is the “sweet spot”?
- Creative use of non-news/political cable TV shows and other outlets
- How does voice differ on social media platforms (blog, tweet, post, G+, pin)?
- Developing a surrogate strategy

**Discussion:** Class will explore effective tips for using social media, specifically Twitter. We will look at the Senate’s Top Tweeters—does using this real-time information network increase their reach?

**Guest Lecturer:** a specialist in social media will discuss how social media is used in today’s messaging

**Assignment Due Today:** Turn in your news story, brief discussion on what you learned about the “other side”.
Assignment: Written Assignment (7): Write Tweets based on the packet of articles we've handed out. 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.

Week 12 – Tuesday, April 7, 2015

Communicating with Citizen Advocates: Mail & Phone

Topic and Content Covered: How politicians communicate with their constituents.

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
Constituent Mail, Email and Phone Calls.
Why letters/emails and calls matter:
Pitfalls to avoid. Remember, once a communication leaves the office it is a public document (or voicemail, video if captured) Politicians and social media

Assignment(s) Due Today: Discussion of your tweets

Assignment:
1. Written Assignment (8): You will be given actual (redacted) letters from constituents to Members of Congress and the position of the Member on the issue of concern. Write a response that communicates your message while respecting the point of view of the writer. You will also be given a few examples of phone messages, and emails. Tell how you would handle each and write an appropriate response.

Week 13 – Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Putting Out Fires - What is a Crisis? And Reactive Damage Control

Topic and Content Covered: How to handle a crisis situation.

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
Damage Control—What to do when your boss misspeaks, “Goes Dean,” or when the unexpected happens.

Crisis 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/Crisis: A good example; a poor example (Need Examples)

Discussion: 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.”
Assignment Due Today: Turn in and have brief discussion of your constituent correspondence

Week 14 – Tuesday, April 21, 2014

The Big Finale - Final Exam

Topics and Content Covered: Final Exam – Two parts:

1. Written exam: You will be given a scenario relating to your politician or issue area. You must write a press release, one social media tag/lede/message, and determine your target audience. Be prepared to write where you are sending this release, where you are posting and WHY.

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

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