M.P.S. in Political Management
Spring 2016
January 12 – April 19, 2016

Crisis Management in American Politics
PMGT 6458.10
3 Credits

Tuesdays 7:10 – 9:40pm
414A Phillips Hall

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Michael D. Edwards

Contact Information & Communication

Professor Edwards maintains offices near the George Washington University campus and will gladly make himself available for consultations with students during the week. In addition, students should feel free to call him with questions or concerns. He can be reached by telephone at (202) 822-7564. He can also be contacted at either of two email addresses: MEdwards@nea.org or Edwardsm@gwu.edu.

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 in our classroom until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave this site, we will meet at Gelman Library 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

Preparation for, attendance at, and participation in all classes are essential elements in this course. Students are expected to be present at each class. Should a student not be able to attend a session, he/she should notify the instructors in advance and make appropriate arrangements to familiarize himself/herself with the material covered, to submit any assignments due at that time, and to receive any additional assignments that might be forthcoming from that session.

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

1. Assess a political environment, develop an appropriate strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy.
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective communication skills and techniques for use in a political environment.
3. Collect, evaluate and incorporate relevant empirical evidence to shape, optimize, and continuously inform the developed strategy.
4. Find, engage and motivate the essential and appropriate leaders, professionals and citizens to achieve the developed strategy.
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards in the profession and exhibits principled leadership.

Course Description and Overview

This course examines the management of crisis situations, turning points, and defining moments in contemporary electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs. It is designed to help students develop the tools and techniques necessary to predict, identify, isolate, avert, manage and even capitalize on such situations. The course will be conducted as a seminar emphasizing in-depth class participation and discussion. Through examination of recent case studies and the use of simulation exercises, it explores both the theoretical and practical aspects of crisis management in today's world.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.
2. Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations.
3. Discern the reputational and electoral consequences of scandal, and develop the appropriate strategy to minimize negative effects.
4. Understand and deploy ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises and scandals.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to complete a comprehensive research, analysis, and writing assignment; one group research, analysis and presentation project; and one short assignment related to crisis identification and a second short assignment on ethical issues in a specific crisis situation. Details about the three assignments will be distributed at the second class of the semester. The components of the final class grades will be as follows: individual research and analysis project (30%); group presentation project (20%); general preparation for and participation in class discussions (30%); crisis identification assignment (10%), ethics assignment (10%).
### Evaluation and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Identification Memo</td>
<td>• Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Memorandum</td>
<td>• Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises</td>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Group Crisis Case Study                 | • Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.  
• Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations.  
• Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises. | March 22 | 20%    |
|                                         |                                                                                                | March 29 |        |
| Individual Research & Analysis Paper    | • Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.  
• Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations.  
• Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises. | April 19 | 30%    |
| Attendance and Participation            |                                                                                                |          | 30%    |
| Total                                   |                                                                                                |          | 100%   |
Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
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*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials

- Steven Fink, Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable, iUniverse, 2000
- Laurence Barton, Crisis in Organizations II, South-Western College Publishing, 2001

Additional readings will be available on reserve at the George Washington University Library or distributed by the instructor.

All reading assignments should be completed at a reasonable pace throughout the term with the caveat that students should be prepared to discuss each assignment at the class at which it is scheduled for discussion.

Students should also be familiar with recent American political history and are encouraged to review books and related materials regarding U.S. Presidential campaigns in the post-World War II era.

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

- Ian Mitroff, Managing Crises Before They Happen, AMACOM, 2001
• Ian Mitroff and Thierry Pauchant, *We’re So Big and Powerful Nothing Bad Can Happen To Us*, Birch Lane Books, New York, 1990


Tentative Course Calendar*

*Professor Edwards 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: January 12**

**Overview -- Crisis Management in American Politics**

Introduction to crisis management in the electoral, legislative, and issue management arenas. Overview of the material to be covered. Discussion of the required readings, assignments, and course projects.

**Week 2: January 19**

**Anatomy of a Crisis**

Overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of crises and crisis management in the political world. Exploration of the differences between crises and turning points in the political realm and those in corporate, international, and public policy settings. Discussion of the dynamics of crisis management including the nature and stages of crises, participant behavior in crisis situations, and the impact of the crisis environment on decision-making in campaigns and in legislative advocacy. Examination of the potential opportunities and benefits presented by crises.

*Crisis Identification Memo assigned.*

**Week 3: January 26**

**Scandal**

An examination of scandals in American politics and their impact on governing institutions, parties, elections, and those participants embroiled in scandal. Understanding the role of the media in scandals, discern the types of scandals, and gauging the varying severity of their likely effects. Exploration of potential strategies to minimize, exploit, or manage a scandal. Consideration of the ethical dimensions associated with political scandals.

*Read (on Blackboard):*


Group Project Teams formed.

Week 4: February 2

Decision-Making in a Crisis Environment (1)

Exploration of the organizational dynamics and decision-making processes in the legislative/political environment. Practical and theoretical approaches to participant behavior in crisis situations. Examination of organizational dysfunction during crises.

Crisis Identification Memorandum due.
Ethics Memorandum assigned

Week 5: February 9

Decision-Making in a Crisis Environment (2)

Discussion of internal operations and structure, stakeholder relationships, internal information flow, and response capabilities. Exploration of adversarial responses to crisis situations and actions. Approaches to risk assessment and crisis planning.

Individual Research & Analysis paper topic due.

Week 6: February 16

The Ethics of Crisis Management

An exploration of the ethical issues raised in confronting crises. Developing a framework for ethical decision-making and behavior in crisis situations. Approaches to addressing dilemmas in crisis management in ways that uphold ethical standards. In-depth discussion of the multiple crisis situations presented in the film, Wag the Dog.

Prior to Class:
Watch the film Wag the Dog (here’s the trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNo0BicRM8k) and read/consult the screenplay at: http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Wag-the-Dog.html

Week 7: February 23

The Media and the Crisis

Discussion of the mass media and crisis management in the political and corporate worlds. How the media covers crisis situations and affects the crisis environment. Examination of the increasing personalization of politics by the media. Problems of episodic coverage. The impact of the media on crisis management strategies and tactics.

Ethics Memorandum due
Week 8: March 1

Crisis Communications

Exploration of communications and public relations tactics and strategies in crisis -- and potential crisis -- situations. Discussion of crafting of communications action plans; message development and delivery; advertising approaches; government and community relations activities; media, press and public relations efforts.

Week 9: March 8

Debates

Discussion of the role candidate debates play as a turning point in electoral campaigns, the impact of media on debates, debate preparation and follow-through. Negotiating the terms and conditions of political debates.

Week 10: March 22

Case Studies in Crisis Management

Presentation of student group projects.

Week 11: March 29

Case Studies in Crisis Management

Presentation of student group projects.

Week 12: April 5

Negative Advertising

Examination of the dynamics and impact of negative advertising in electoral politics today. Discussion of effective strategies to respond to negative advertising.

Week 13: April 12

Planning for the Inevitable

Examination of the tools and techniques for identifying, preventing, managing, and capitalizing on crisis situations. Discussion of strategic planning and crisis forecasting, crisis management plans, organizational structure, crisis aversion and response tactics.

Read (On Blackboard):

**Week 14: April 19**

**The Business of Crisis Management**

Examination of the resources available to assist in crisis management situations including polling, issue research, opposition research, government relations, community relations, communications development and public relations, issues management and campaign consultants.

_Individual Research and Analysis Project due._

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