

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Digital Content Management

PMGT 6470

Summer 2016

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Jonathan Halls

Jonathan Halls is a media training specialist and has been teaching and doing media for more than 25 years. Formerly head of television, radio operations and new media training at the BBC, he was also training manager of the BBC's New Media Training Unit in the pioneering days of the Web. Today he is Principal of Jonathan Halls & Associates.

After his time at the BBC he designed and delivered the training at the Daily Telegraph's groundbreaking converged newsroom transformation for IFRA Newsplex in 2007 and has trained journalists and editors in digital media production and narrative at numerous media companies around the globe including The Times (London), Financial Times, DeVolkskrant (Netherlands), Metro (London), Le Monde (France), L'Espresso (Portugal), Romania Libera (Romania), Times (India), Mediacorp (Singapore), BBC, ITV, Channel Four, and many more.

Jonathan's interests are in media psychology and cognition and the influence of transmedia narrative on the way people think and perceive their world. He works across audio, video and screen text. He moved to Washington DC in 2009 and broadened his work to teaching media techniques for non-media professionals with an emphasis on making media available to non-media professionals such as educators, marketers and political operatives.

He was on the jury for the *European Digital Media Awards in 2014* and the *Asian Digital Media Awards in 2013*. He was a speaker and moderator at the WAN-IFRA Middle East Newspaper Conference in Dubai 2014 and 2015 and a speaker at the World Newspaper Congress in Bangkok in 2014. He is also host of the K.ZO Digital Video Boot Camp.

Jenna Brayton

Jenna is formerly a member of the first White House digital team – known as the Office of Digital Strategy – a team tasked with helping President Obama find his voice online. At the

White House Jenna served as Associate Director of Content and Operations, working to manage strategic content partnerships, communications campaigns, and digital initiatives and outreach.

Prior to her position at the White House Jenna worked for President Obama in several other capacities, including on his campaign and Inaugural Committee.

She has lectured at many universities and academic forums around the world and continues to teach classes on politics, the presidency, and digital engagement.

Contact Information

You may contact the instructors through Blackboard or via email. We will aim to respond to emails within 24 to 72 hours. Office hours will be held by appointment: please email us if you would like to meet and we will set up a time with you.

IMPORTANT INFO

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: <https://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 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 a location to be determined in class 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: <https://campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Participants need to attend 80% of classes and complete all assignments to pass.

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

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.

Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Utilize effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments by the required due dates;
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 into their written assignments.

Course Description and Overview

This class gives students a practical set of skills to plan and produce digital content for campaigns. It covers basic theory about digital storytelling, the dynamics of telling those stories in different modalities (video, text, graphics, etc.) across different platforms (desktop, tablet, mobile) and how to produce the content as well as administer the campaign. The class is a mix of theory and practice.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this class students should be able to:

1. Create social media campaigns on behalf of their professional affiliation or organization;
2. Generate digital content, including audio and video campaigns;
3. Measure the results of digital communications campaigns;
4. Understand and identify corporate trends and best practices in digital communication;
5. Explain how the internet has changed the way we read and absorb information, and explain the implications of this shift for journalism, politics, and other news-generating industries;
6. Discuss the ethical implications of the digital shift for: the media, news dissemination more generally, the consumer, and the American public;

7. Discuss the role of the media in today's digital environment – is there still a Fourth Estate?

Course Requirements

Your course grade will be based on five assignments each worth 20%. Class participation and attendance will be taken into account at the end of the class as well.

Evaluation and Grading

We want to make the grading more than just an academic evaluation exercise so we are happy to discuss individual projects as long as they conform to our criteria. If you are working on a similar project already and would like to substitute it for one of these below, please don't hesitate to ask. Grading will be based on the intrinsic quality of your work. The breakdown of assignments appears below:

Assignment	Learning Objective Addressed	Due Date	Weight
<p>Assignment 1: Audio package Create a 30 second audio package that persuades members of Congress to legislate minimum seat sizes for commercial aircraft to 18 inches wide. The package should be recorded properly with a quality microphone and include smooth editing and the use of multitrack for spoken word, sound effects and music. The spoken word content needs to follow audio writing conventions. The final assignment should be submitted via email as an MP3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate digital content, including audio and video campaigns. 	June 2	20%
<p>Assignment 2: Future paper Write a short paper describing what you think the digital media ecosystem will look like in ten years' time. You should explain what you think the characteristics of digital media will be (such as interactive, multi-platform etc.) and how citizens will interact with information and form their views of the world, politics, and general life. Think about new technologies and more importantly what those new technologies will do for society and how they can be used in politics. Explain if you think these are positive or negative. 1,000 words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the internet has changed the way we read and absorb information, and explain the implications of this shift for journalism, politics, and other news-generating industries 	June 16	20%
<p>Assignment 3: Digital plan Create a project plan for a cause or campaign that exploits the most effective digital tools for the group, and balances the resource tensions of time, money, and scope. Include a rationale for why each tool is appropriate to the target.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create social media campaigns on behalf of their professional affiliation or organization Measure the results of 	June 30	20%

<p>Please include a full analysis of the different roles of each individual participating (ex: is someone acting as project manager? Is someone the creative person?) Take on one of the roles of a traditional strategist and lay out your plan for getting the message out. 2,000 words.</p>	<p>digital communications campaigns</p>		
<p>Assignment 4: Video package Create a 30 to 90 second video package that persuades parents to feed their children less sugar and opt for healthier unprocessed foods. This video package should be picture-led and cannot have any voiceovers. It can, however, include dialogue if it is appropriate to the presentation of the narrative. The pictures must be shot with correct exposure, focus, white balance, and feature clear audio. The pictures must also follow classic framing conventions. The final video should be submitted via email either as a QuickTime or Windows Media File.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate digital content, including audio and video campaigns. 	<p>July 7</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Assignment 5: Journalist/politico ethical tension paper Today’s complex news climate has produced growing tensions between journalists, political campaigns and citizens, which lead some commentators to question how well-informed can voters be? Journalists argue their access to key people and events is being sold short by campaigns that produce their own digital messages and distribute it directly to voters, bypassing the media and their role as gatekeeper. Some politicians refuse to hold regular news conferences or talk only to select media outlets that may be deemed “softer” such as local radio or newspapers. Journalists are accused of sloppy work- not digging deep enough in their research, using campaign-provided info, or relying on sensationalist stories that lead to ratings. But, on the flip side, many politicians note that the emergence of the internet has made it possible for them to connect with citizens in a way that was previously impossible, therefore helping civic engagement. What’s really happening here? Your assignment is to explore the impact of the new digital ecosystem: analyze whether these charges are true, and whether you think that they have made civic engagement/discourse better or worse. Avoid the simplistic option of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the ethical implications of the digital shift for: the media, news dissemination more generally, the consumer, and the American public • Discuss the role of the media in today’s digital environment – is there still a Fourth Estate? • Explain how the internet has changed the way we read and absorb information, and explain the implications of this shift for journalism, politics, and other news-generating industries 	<p>July 21</p>	<p>20%</p>

taking one side and tease out what motivates each party. 1,500 words.			
Total			100%

Grading and Grading Scale

In this class you may be penalized for late work, although we will still accept late submissions. We will adhere to the below grading scale, and grades will be rounded according to standard rounding procedure (93.4 and below is rounded to a 93, meaning you receive a letter grade of an A-, and 93.5 and above is rounded to 94, or a letter grade of an A).

Letter Grade	Raw Score	Grading Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent job.
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.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to complete the assignment.

Required Text and Learning Materials

- How to Shoot Video that Doesn't Suck. (2011 Steve Stockman. Workman Publishing.) (Available on Amazon)
- Crafting Engaging Audio Content. (Talkshow Media, 2016)
<https://www.createspace.com/6246195> (ENTER DISCOUNT CODE EEQSNNBX TO ORDER AT COST PRICE)
- Digital Storytelling for Reporters, (Talkshow Media, 2016)
<https://www.createspace.com/6209728> (ENTER DISCOUNT CODE EEQSNNBX TO ORDER AT COST PRICE)
- Letting Go of the Words. (2014 Janice Redish. Morgan Kaufman Publishers.) (Available

on Amazon)

- Presidential Campaigning and Social Media. (2014 John Hendricks. Oxford University Press.) (Available on Amazon)

Additional readings may be found on the class Blackboard account, noted below online, or handed out in class.

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

- Visual Language for Designers. (2009 Connie Malamed. Rockport Publishing.) This is a cognitive approach to design.
- Don't Make Me Think – 3rd Edition. (2014 Steve Krug. New Riders.) This is an excellent easy-to-read book on Web Usability.
- Mobile Usability (2013 Nielsen Norman Group, authors Jakob Nielsen & Raluca Budiu. New Riders.) This book looks at user research into how people consume information on their cell phones and tablets.
- Save the Cat – The Last Book on Screenwriting That You'll Ever Need. (2005 Blake Snyder. Published by Michael Wiese Productions.)

Websites

<http://philipbloom.net>

<http://www.dvxuser.com/V6>

<http://www.rippletraining.com>

<https://www.creativecow.net>

<https://www.hurlbutvisuals.com/blog>

<http://www.laforetvisuals.com>

<http://www.newsshooter.com>

<http://www.eoshd.com>

<http://www.adweek.com>

<http://digiday.com>

<http://www.awwwards.com>

<http://alistapart.com>

<http://enga.ge/products/applying-inside-the-cave-beyond-campaigns/>

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

The instructors reserve 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.

May 19: Intro and welcome

Learning objectives: Describe the dynamics of communication in the new digital environment.

Readings due: None

Homework assignments due: None

Class agenda:

- Storytelling and the evolution of communication
- Digital media and public figures
- Digital media and journalism
- Syllabus walk through

May 26: Creating audio content

Learning objectives: Plan digital audio content following current production trends and rules.

Readings due:

- Crafting Engaging Audio Content. (Talkshow Media, 2016)
<https://www.createspace.com/6246195> (ENTER DISCOUNT CODE EEQSNNBX TO ORDER AT COST PRICE)
- Digital Storytelling for Reporters, (Talkshow Media, 2016)
<https://www.createspace.com/6209728> (ENTER DISCOUNT CODE EEQSNNBX TO ORDER AT COST PRICE) . Please read section 3.

Homework assignments due: None

Class agenda:

- Audio psychology
- How to produce audio content fast
- Practical: microphones, vocal dynamics, records & editing

June 2: Creating video content part 1

Learning objectives: Plan digital video content following current production trends and rules.

Readings due:

- Digital Storytelling for Reporters, (Talkshow Media, 2016). Please read section 4.

Homework assignments due: Assignment 1 - audio package

Class agenda:

- Video psychology
- Storyboarding
- Shoot and edit exercise

June 9: Writing digital content

Learning objectives: Describe and employ processes to create innovative and persuasive digital messages across different modalities and platforms in support of an organization or agenda.

Readings due:

- The most common marketing mistake startups make. (Zack Rosen. 5/5/16. Tech Crunch.) Retrievable [here](#).
- Wordpress vs. Joomla vs. Drupal + CMS comparison chart. (Robert Mening. 12/28/15. Websitesetup.org.) Retrievable [here](#).
- Why Your Business Needs A Responsive Website Before 2014. (Josh Steimle. 11/8/13. Forbes.) Retrievable [here](#).
- Letting Go of the Words. (Janice Redish. 2014. Morgan Kaufman Publishers.)

Homework assignments due: None

Class agenda:

- General media writing principles
- Responsive design and writing for changing screens
- Audience appreciation: how to write for different groups
- Optimizing your writing to gain traction online
- Content Management Systems (CMS) and other architecture

June 16: Social media and community management

Learning objectives: Create persuasive and creative social media campaigns on behalf of a company, organization, or agenda. Measure the results of your communications campaigns.

Readings due:

- Presidential Campaigning and Social Media. (John Hendricks and Dan Schill. 2015. Oxford University Press.) Please read chapter 7-10, 14-17.

Homework assignments due: Assignment 2 – future paper

Class agenda:

- How to use social media in a professional context
- Best practices for: Instagram, Medium, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest, Vine, Vimeo
- Audience appreciation: how to figure out who lives where
- Measuring the results of digital media communications
- In-class activity

June 23: The project management side of digital campaigns

Learning objectives: Manage a digital campaign to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Readings due:

- Top 10 Project Management Challenges. (University Alliance of Villanova University. Villanova.com/resources). Retrievable [here](#).

Homework assignments due: None

Class agenda:

- The project management triangle: managing time, money/resources, and scope
- Forecasting
- Managing communication breakdowns
- Managing and adhering to stakeholder expectations
- In-class activity

June 30: Creating video content part 2

Learning objectives: Plan and execute digital video content following current production grammar.

Readings due:

- How to Shoot Video that Doesn't Suck. (2011 Steve Stockman. Workman Publishing.)

Homework assignments due: Assignment 3 – digital plan

Class agenda:

- How to get crisp, clear shots with your camera
- How to edit video so it flows and draws the eye
- Techniques to make content fast without compromising quality

July 7: Digital content mindset

Learning objectives: Explain how the internet has changed the way we read and absorb information. Discuss the role of the media in today's digital environment.

Readings due: TBD. Will be announced in class.

Homework assignments due: Assignment 4 - Video package

Class agenda:

- How media is changing and what it might look like in the future
- Developing an innovative mindset and generating fresh content ideas

July 14: Corporate and current trends in digital communication

Learning objectives: Explain corporate trends and best practices in digital communications campaigns. Identify the future of digital communication, and be able to explain how the mediums are evolving.

Readings due:

- 5 Trends That Will Change How Companies Use Social Media in 2016. (Ryan Holmes. 12/09/15. Fast Company.) Retrievable [here](#).
- 5 Trends Reshaping Social Media. (John Rampton. 8/25/15. Entrepreneur.com.) Retrievable [here](#).
- Ten Social Media Trends That Will Shape Marketing Over the Next Decade. (Peter Kim. 6/25/15. The Guardian.) Retrievable [here](#).
- DiGiorno Pizza Live-Tweeted The Sound of Music and It Was Very Tasty. (Roo Ciambriello. 12/6/13. AdWeek.) Retrievable [here](#).

Homework assignments due: None

Class agenda:

- Case studies
- Public figures and social media
- Brand management online
- Influencers

July 21: Wrap up

Learning objectives: Discuss the role of the media in today's digital environment. Understand how the role has changed over time, and where it may go. Explain the ethical implications of these changes.

Reading due: None

Homework assignments due: Assignment 5 - journalist/politico ethical tension paper

Class agenda:

- Last day! Any last questions?