

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Spring, 2016

Jan. 14 – Apr. 21

**Public Opinion, Political Socialization and
Public Relations**

PSPR 6223

3 Credits

Thursdays – 7:10-9:40 PM

GWU Alexandria Center, Rm. 212

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Ben Zingman, Ph.D. – Adjunct Professor

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Communication

The best way to reach me on an urgent matter is by phone. For routine communications, please use my GWU e-mail. I try to respond to all email the same day, so if you've not received a timely response, please follow-up with me by phone. Course materials will be submitted via Blackboard (see below).

Generally, I will be available in the Adjunct Office at the GWU Alexandria Center for at least two hours prior to class, except on days when there is a guest speaker. I am also available for brief discussions after class, and by appointment, including phone calls.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly 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 (See Final Page for Full Information)

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 **outside, across from Potbelly Sandwiches on Jamieson Street**, 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 are expected to attend all classes. If a student needs to miss a class for health, business or family reasons, please email me prior to class. Students will be assigned to study teams, so please contact your teammates to be sure you receive class notes and materials.

Civility & Courtesy Policy

When in doubt about a particular action or behavior in class, please exercise unrestrained civility and courtesy.

During this course we will be discussing and arguing about ideas, values and concepts that often have deep personal meaning. It is expected that everyone (including yours truly) will maintain a civil tone and demeanor even if we believe we are completely correct and the other person is totally wrong. This means, we will: 1) allow others to speak without interruption; 2) treat one another with respect; 3) avoid raising our voices to levels equal to or louder than a jet engine; and 4) grant guest speakers the freedom to express their views even if, and *especially if*, we disagree.

Cell phones, tablets, laptops and other devices are only to be used for class purposes. If you must check your cousin’s email, the status of your most recent online purchase, your fantasy sports league or the balance in your Swiss bank account, please wait for a break, or save it until after class.

Please refrain from using devices when there’s a guest speaker.

Eating in class is often a necessity for students who come straight from work. If you eat in class you are responsible for cleaning up your area.

PS – Please refrain from loud, messy or especially aggressive eating when we have a guest speaker.

Needless to say, cook stoves, barbeque grills and campfires are not allowed.

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:

Professor Lawrence Parnell
Director, Strategic Public Relations Program
lparnell@gwu.edu | 703-29- 4150

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
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GWU Academic Calendar

Spring Semester 2016 (<http://www.gwu.edu/academic-calendar>)

Classes Begin	Monday, January 11
Our First Class	Thursday, January 14
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no classes)	Monday, January 18
President's Day (no classes)	Monday, February 15
Spring Break	Monday, March 14 – Saturday, March 19
Our Last Class	Thursday, April 21
Last Day of Classes	Monday, April 25
Make-Up Day	Tuesday, April 26
Designated Monday	Wednesday, April 27
Reading Days	Thursday, April 28 – Friday, April 29
Final Examinations	Monday, May 2 – Tuesday, May 10
Commencement Weekend	Friday, May 13 – Sunday, May 15
Spring Degree Conferral	Sunday, May 15

THE COURSE

Strategic Public Relations Program Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Develop awareness and critical thinking regarding the role, formation, measurement, and use of public opinion in contemporary U.S. public affairs and public relations.
- Understand processes that shape opinion, political and marketplace behavior, and the role we play as communicators in engaging and influencing these processes.
- Enhance critical thinking about when and how communications can and should be used to support or change public opinion.
- Write a substantial analysis of how communications activities are utilized in the real world to influence opinions, attitudes, and behavior. (And allow me to add a word about writing. As you will see from the syllabus and the weekly lectures, **I am a firm believer in citing sources to support arguments.** I am not asking for full footnotes, though they are always welcome. But in your papers, please support your views, assertions and conclusions with references and citations that allow me the opportunity to check sources and how you use them.)
- Enhance written and presentation communications skills.

Course Description and Overview

Is it possible to have picked a better time to study public opinion and public relations than today? Donald Trump? Star Wars? Global terrorism? Gun violence? Black Lives Matter? Immigration? Millennials? We can go on and on, but I think most of us will agree, this is a great time and the place to try to figure out what's going and the role communications plays in messing up or improving the human condition.

Some of you may recall the 2008 election. Talking heads from Bill O'Reilly to Chris Matthews debated whether or not President Obama's election was a sign that America had entered its post-racial, post-industrial, post-traumatic stress or simply post-Bush era.

Then, they held the 2010 off-year elections. Talking heads from Jon Stewart to Mike Huckabee debated whether or not this was a sign that America had entered the post-Obama, post-health care reform, post-post-racial era. Just when everyone was talking about the Tea Party, whammo! Along came Occupy Wall Street, fueled by frustrated young people, and taken by some as a sign the American Dream is dead or dying. (*Time* magazine asked, "Can You Still Move Up in America?" in its cover story on Nov. 14, 2011. We'll be reading the June, 2015 "Is the American Dream Dead?" by *WPost* columnist Chris Cillizza) Leading thinkers speculated about the new generational gaps, the civilian-military gap, the technology literacy gap and the jobs and income gaps, to name a few. What did it all mean?

Then came the election of 2012. Tea Partiers and Occupiers vied for attention and influence with each other and with traditional party hacks and power brokers from the left, right, and center. The fate of the nation appeared to be at stake, as we struggled to balance our wish lists, or as some prefer to call them, budgets. Many observers believed there was no real difference between candidates and parties—a contest merely of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. After all, virtually every Republican candidate during the primaries agreed that the real problem is President Obama (a familiar refrain these days as well). But, if one factors out health care, the Obama Administration had carried forth a great many Bush era policies: Iraq and Afghanistan, TARP and bailouts, free trade agreements and maintaining Guantanamo. So, what did it all mean?

In 2012, buoyed by a big-data strategy and a well-executed “ground game,” Team Obama overcame many obstacles to retain the White House. Democrats retained the Senate, but the air of optimism had left the balloon. Recall that President Obama had 62.6 million votes (50.6 percent) and 332 electoral votes, while Governor Romney tallied 59.1 million votes (47.8 percent) and 206 electoral votes. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/election-map-2012/president/>) The President held a job approval rating of 50.8 percent in January, 2013. Yet, as Huffington Post noted, his approval rating tanked to 42.4 percent on Election Day, 2014, and his disapproval rating zoomed from 44.6 percent to 52.6 percent over the same timeframe. What did it mean?

Today? As this is written in mid-December, 2015, Huffington Post reports the President’s approval rating is 43.6 percent, and his disapproval rating is 51.5 percent. (See Huff Post’s marvelous interactive graph blending the results of several polls: <http://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster/obama-job-approval>).

So now, we look back at 2014. The result of those off-year elections was clear long before the polls closed – an overwhelming GOP win. One of the widely-touted hallmarks of the 2008 campaign was the return to political life of young Americans, especially African-American and Latino youth. Yet, the younger voters, Latinos, and African Americans upon whose shoulders Obama won two national elections, predictably failed to vote in substantial numbers during the off-years, or in some cases, were successfully wooed by Republican candidates.

“For Republicans, the lesson is they can be competitive among younger voters, although nationally, they still lag behind with that group and in some states, the Democratic tilt of younger voters may pose a problem in years to come. For Democrats, the message must be to re-engage with young people who had provided more support in the 2008 Senate races,” concluded CIRCLE¹ on Nov. 6, 2014, as cited in “Civic Learning in the News. CIRCLE: 21.5% Youth Turnout: Two-Day Estimate Comparable to Recent Midterm Years,” published by The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a Project of the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center University of Pennsylvania.

“General election voter turnout for the 2014 midterms was the lowest it has been in any election cycle since World War II, according to early projections by the United States Election Project. Just 36.4 percent of the voting-eligible population cast ballots as of last Tuesday, continuing a steady decline in midterm voter participation that has spanned several decades.” (“Voter turnout lowest since World War II,” *Washington Post*, 11 Nov 14, p. A3.)

Even in Ferguson, Missouri, ground-zero for one of America’s most poignant domestic news stories regarding the shooting of Michael Brown, voter turnout for the first post-incident municipal election was mediocre (Ferguson holds these elections in the Spring). In 2015, “Demonstrations gave way to increased civic activism with 29% of eligible voters casting more than 3,700 ballots. That’s more than double the 12% of eligible voters that came out for last April’s mayoral election,” *USAToday* reported. (www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/04/07/ferguson-voters-head-to-polls/25401037) But it is still nothing about which to brag.

¹CIRCLE - The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement at Tufts University, is one of the nation’s leading sources of data and analysis on the ways young people engage in political and civic activity.

The election of 2014, like the two that preceded it, brought to Congress a new cadre of Republican legislators with an apparent distaste for the status quo, and sufficient support from their home district voters to allow them to challenge leadership in their own party. Speaker John Boehner? Gone! Former Majority Leader Eric Cantor? Gone. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell – on the endangered species list. Why? How could these GOP leaders not be sufficiently conservative to satisfy the party's Freedom Caucus members? What was missing?

And, while we're at it, 17 years after Columbine, three years after Newtown, seven months after Charleston, four months after Umpqua Community College, a mere six weeks after Colorado Springs and San Bernadino, why is the nation still sharply divided on questions relating to gun violence, ownership and access? What makes this issue, or other issues such as abortion and voting rights, citizenship, immigration and refugees so intractable and so difficult to resolve?

And let's not forget that racial justice encompasses a powerful and at times polarizing set of high-visibility issues. Trayvon Martin? Michael Brown? Laquan McDonald? Black Lives Matter? Fisher v. The University of Texas? Why was the University of Missouri football team able to determine the fate of senior university officials in the midst of a racially-focused campus dispute, and what, if anything, does that tell us about higher education?

The racially divided perception of the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 or to the O.J. Simpson verdict in 1995 showed what many regarded as a nation divided by separate black and white realities and narratives. Today, nearing the end of the first African American presidency, have we grown closer together or further apart on racial questions?

And of course, these are not the only racial and ethnic concerns. Latino American and Asian American populations are growing, and bringing with them additional challenges in politics, culture, economics and education. Add the concerns of religious minorities, most visibly Muslim Americans, and we may be inclined to ask how such issues can ever be resolved? Where lies the common ground? How can America get past these emotional and intellectual divisions?

On the other hand, we seem to have resolved highly emotional issues regarding LGBT individuals and same-sex marriage to such a degree that it takes a special high-visibility event – such as Rowan County (KY) Clerk Kim Davis' refusal to grant marriage licenses – to bring the issue back to the front page and the top of the newscast. Are these issues really resolved? If so, what lessons can we learn?

Now, we are in the midst of the 2016 campaign. One-time stalwarts Scott Walker and Rick Perry failed to meet expectations and Donald Trump is writing a new chapter in communications and campaign tactics with every controversial statement he makes. Outsiders Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina had their 'wowie' moments during the campaign as they, like The Donald, caught the wind of anti-Washington anger in their sails. So did Sens. Rand Paul and Ted Cruz. Yet, now, except for Cruz, they appear to be fading. Why did the so-called experts fail to anticipate the rise of the "outsiders and especially Trump's remarkable staying power?

Meanwhile Hillary Clinton appears unstoppable in her quest for the Democratic nomination, yet Bernie Sanders, an avowed Socialist, maintains strong support among many voters. Bernie Sanders? How can a far-left, relatively unknown senator from one of the smallest states be the most imposing challenger to the former first lady, senator and secretary of state? Sanders, after all, is the closest thing to an outsider that the Democrats have seen in quite a while.

As students of public affairs, politics and communications, what are we to conclude? What the heck does this all mean?

In this course, we're going to stop, take a deep breath, and try to understand what—if anything—these events (and many others) tell us about public opinion, the public mood, the public mind and hopefully, public relations.

For communicators, the presidential and Congressional political races, unemployment and income inequality, scandals from Wall Street, to politics, to the college and professional sports locker room, and the ongoing issues of war and peace, the environment, education, social justice and more raise several important questions:

- Who exactly is “the public?” Me? You? Everyone?
- What is public opinion? What I think? What you think? What the “power brokers” think or want us to think?
- Where does public opinion come from—family, school, religious upbringing, ethnic background, jobs, the old media? The new media?
- What can influence public opinion and who tries to do this?
- How can we tell when we see public opinion in operation? How do we measure it?
- And at the foundation of these inquiries, what implications does public opinion have for us as communicators; how does it affect the roles we play for our organizations and clients, and *vice versa*?

Interestingly, in recent years we've seen renewed interest in political socialization, the process by which people view their engagement in politics and acquire and maintain their political attitudes, biases, beliefs – in short, their public opinions. Here too, we face a laundry list of important questions about what people learn, how they learn it, where they learn it, how they reinforce or alter what they've learned, and why all this is important to us as citizens and, for purposes of this course, as *communicators*.

Much of the debate centers on the forces that influence public opinion and political socialization, and most often, the focus is on the power of the press and the media broadly, and their impact on our institutions of government, business and not-for-profit endeavor. But, where does that power come from and how is it exercised? Through what mechanisms do the media affect our political and social decisions? Is it only through news? What about advertising, film, entertainment TV, radio, and music? What about the role of new, alternative media, or, alternatives to media?

For example, did the release of Beyoncé's eponymous album in December, 2013 change the way products, candidates and ideas are marketed?

In a press release from Columbia (Records), Beyoncé said she was bored with traditional album marketing and that she wanted to release the album in her own way. What she really did, however, was illustrate the true power of social media. ***Within 12 hours, 1.2 million tweets were posted about “Beyoncé”*** and within the first 24 hours more than 430,000 albums had sold for \$15.99 on iTunes. (<http://www.inc.com/abigail-tracy/beyonce-shows-the-true-power-of-social-media.html>)

Just a one-time occurrence? What about Taylor Swift's album, "1989"?

Swift's hard push out of country territory may have alienated her first fans, but the new album...won her legions more. A big part of that had to do with her extensive marketing campaign, which included a blitz of television and radio appearances and those ubiquitous Diet Coke ads. The physical release--which included a CD version with extra tracks sold only at Target--sold 647,000 copies, and 640,000 digital versions were downloaded. But the push really began back in August when Swift released "Shake It Off" as a single and sent fans to iTunes to pre-order the album.

Just because "1989" went platinum doesn't mean Swift has forgotten her fans. In response to news from Nielsen SoundScan that she sold 1.287 million copies of "1989" within the first week, Swift posted a ridiculous video of her lip-synching to Kendrick Lamar in her car.

That the Internet fell for it was no surprise, given that **Swift is a social media master**. On platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook she makes direct connections with fans, often reposting images of them with her album. "When you do that, you generate a kind of advocacy and excitement that no level of advertising could," Matt Britton, chief executive of MRY, a youth marketing agency with the Publicis Groupe, told the *New York Times*. When fans see her hanging out at a Knicks game, they feel like they're a part of her life, and **that makes her authentic**. (<http://www.inc.com/jill-krasny/3-marketing-moves-from-taylor-swift.html>)

So what about Adele's album, 25?

Nielsen announced today (30 Nov 15) that Adele's new album, 25, has sold over three million copies in the U.S. in its first week. This figure blew the previous record, set when 'N Sync's album *No Strings Attached* sold 2.4 million copies in its first week out in 2000, out of the water. And in 2000, annual CD sales were over five times what they currently are, and the music industry was still ruled by a big network of brick-and-mortar retailers.

Superstar singer Adele hardly uses any of her social media accounts to interact with her fans, publicly refuses to give into the image-obsessed music industry and rejects product endorsements in order to "keep the focus on her music." And yet she sells more albums than anyone in the current or even the past music industry has believed possible. (My emphasis.) Still, the *New York Times* said artists should not emulate the strategies she employs, as they are not likely to lead to success for anyone but Adele. (<http://musicconsultant.com/music-news-2015/soundexchange-royalty-rates-adeles-marketing-strategy-bitcoin-technology/#.VmEQF3uRu-w>)

So what are there lessons here for communicators? Are we clever enough to decipher them?

Plus, there's a reminder that what we do as communicators also helps facilitate, enhance or utilize the media's power to shape the views and behaviors of audiences, even Adele's.

Today, we witness what many decry as the decline of traditional news media. In turn, the rise of social media has created new ways to "reach out and touch someone."² Are Tweets and Facebook the stuff of public opinion? "Sure," we might say, adding, "They're a whole new ballgame!" But are they really new, or are they simply the latest version of an age-old quest for community, meaning, and relevance? And, are they really good at fulfilling these roles, or do they water down the experience so much they we're learning to accept superficial communication as the shadowy substitute for real social, political, and personal relationships?

By the way, note this brief excerpt from the 2013 movie, *Her*, about a man who falls in love with the female voice of the operating system on his cell phone:

Theodore: Do you talk to someone else while we're talking?

Samantha: Yes.

Theodore: Are you talking with someone else right now? People, OS, whatever...

Samantha: Yeah.

Theodore: How many others?

Samantha: 8,316.

Theodore: Are you in love with anybody else?

Samantha: Why do you ask that?

Theodore: I do not know. Are you?

Samantha: I've been thinking about how to talk to you about this.

Theodore: How many others?

Samantha: 641.

(http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1798709/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3)

Most of us have trouble loving a few close relatives and a pet. Is it possible to love 641 people?

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Through analytical research, first-hand accounts, and theoretical constructs, this class will explore the questions noted above, and a great many more.

As the choreographer of this ballet, I should share with you some of my biases about public opinion:

²Starting in 1979 and well into the 80's, this was the tagline of an ad campaign from AT&T to encourage consumers to use their direct-dial long-distance telephone phone service.

1. I believe many of the questions we wrestle with today were raised generations ago and continue to define our understanding of democracy and how it works. The Jeffersonian model of citizenship is often a starting point. We must not yield to a generational conceit that we are the first to question it and its ongoing validity.
2. In trying to understand public opinion, researchers often focus on what they can measure, and this can leave us with detailed knowledge of the wrong information. Often too, the methodology used (including the phrasing and ordering of questions) shapes individual responses, and the result can be a precise delineation of unimportant or wrong information.
3. There is an expectation that the media are “the window to the soul” of public opinion. Yet, our own experience, as well as a strong tradition of critical literature, suggests the traditional media are an imperfect lens. Are social media different?
4. Moreover, the impact of the media on public opinion and political socialization may in fact be greater through cultural and entertainment content and programs than through news. Which has more impact—news reports about genocide, or, the movie *Hotel Rwanda*? Why? Note that a Facebook posting can often trigger more emotion than either a film or a newscast. Why?
5. And finally, the role of public relations regarding public opinion is frequently confusing and often misunderstood. So, we should try to clarify it! BTW, a useful step is mastering the meaning of the rapidly growing lexicon of PR terms and concepts – see, for example, <https://www.mediamiser.com/resources/pr-glossary/publicity-news-and-news-terms/>

Because we share this course in the final year of an historic presidency and in the midst of the caucus and primary season for the next election cycle, this may be a spectacular moment to ask—and possibly, answer—questions about public opinion. Add the ongoing issues raised by “Hands Up. Don’t Shoot,” “Je suis Charlie” and more recently the Paris terror attacks in November, the struggle to realize the goals of the Arab Spring, the potential success of democratic movements in other countries, the confused and halting global reaction to the Syrian refugee crisis and more – and the impact of what we are studying becomes even more urgent. As the course unfolds, we will include news stories and other late-breaking developments that help shed light on our subject.

There are another two or three hundred presumptions I can share with you, but I think you get the picture—the course, the projects, the materials, and the discussions do not exist in a vacuum. Students are expressly and specifically *forbidden* to be ignorant of the political and professional worlds around them.

Course Structure

Most of the semester will involve seminar-style classes, with assigned readings, open discussion and guest speakers. The course is divided into three basic components:

Section 1 – Public Opinion: What is It and Why Do We Care About It? Class 1-7

Section 2 – Political Socialization and Political Engagement: 8-9

Section 3 – Role of Media in Public Opinion and Public Policy: Class 10-14*

(*This section includes a class on how to develop as strategic communications plan)

Study Teams

At the first class, students will be divided into study teams. Study teams allow students to share reading assignments and provide feedback for written work. Your classmates are among the most valuable learning and career resources you will find in any graduate program. Together, you will learn far more than anyone can learn individually. In addition, the nature of our workplace as communicators is increasingly team-oriented and collaborative, so it is beneficial to develop and enhance team performance skills.

Teams will be responsible for sharing synopses of the readings, general information and class highlights – particularly if one of the members misses a class. I will schedule at least one meeting (or more likely, a conference call) with each team prior to Spring Break to be sure everything is working well. Teams should meet or hold a team call at least once per week to ensure all members are in synch.

While there will not be a team project, students will be graded on their team effort **by their teammates**, as part of the overall class work component of the grade. The team’s assessment of each member’s contribution to the team will be worth up to four percent of the overall grade for the course.

Ungraded Paper

At the first class, students will be assigned a brief **ungraded** essay due at the second class to allow me to judge writing levels and subject familiarity. **Note that the quality of writing is important both in this class and in your careers and will be reflected in the grading of papers.**

Grade Components and Weighting

Assignment	Point Value
Ungraded paper	zero
Analysis of State of the Union & GOP Response	10 pts
Initial Paper	20 pts
Strategic Paper	45 pts
Class Work (e.g., participation, class exercises, spot quizzes, “poll watching”)	21 pts (10 from the two five-point “poll watching” assignments, six from quizzes and five at faculty discretion based on class participation)
Study Team Activity	Four pts (graded by other team members)
Total	100

Course grades will be determined as follows, according to departmental guidelines:

A	94+
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
F	0-69

Note: Missed or late assignments will be penalized, unless there is an approved excuse. (See p. 14 for details.)

Note: I do not offer “extra credit.”

Grading Standards

A: In a business environment your work would distinguish you as a top communications professional. The product is outstanding in every way; e.g., strategic thinking, strong research including a solid use of course readings to support arguments, appropriate style, syntax, and grammar and demonstrates the strategic use of communications to achieve organizational objectives.

B: In a business environment this work would reflect well on the student and the student’s work team. The assignment, fulfilled all requirements, and contributed additional ideas and/or insights, but the end produce was relatively ordinary. The assignment would be judged as adequate, workmanlike and serviceable.

C: In a business environment, this work might be sent back for revision. Either you missed a key portion of the assignment, or failed to communicate effectively through. You completed the assignment and fulfilled the requirements but the work would not achieve all of your media relations/communications objectives without major revisions in logic, target media selection or approach strategy.

D: You fulfilled some of the requirements of the assignment, but not all. This work would need to be completely reworked before it would represent you or your company professionally and achieve any meaningful media relations objectives.

F: You did not submit the assignment.

Course Requirements

1. State of the Union and GOP Response Analysis Paper (10 pts)

The 2016 State of the Union speech is scheduled for January 12, two days before our first class. Students will be asked to examine the State of the Union Speech and the Republican response to determine *what values* were actually stressed by the two speakers. Were they truly different, or, were they actually more in alignment than might have been expected? (Actual assignment will be available on Black Board on or before January 11th, and will be handed out in Class 1. It is due at Class 4.)

2. In-Class Performance (21 points)

Students' in-class performance (including **periodic exercises, quizzes, "poll watching" and participation in discussions**) will be a significant part (21 percent) of their grade. **Students are expected to attend each class; if you must miss a class please alert your team members and me in advance. Teammates are expected to brief the absentee on the missed class, including guest speakers.**

Brief quizzes on the readings will be provided in several classes. Each quiz will be worth 1 point towards the class work component of the grade (six pts from quizzes).

Class participation is not simply a matter of how often students speak up in class, but rather, how well they are prepared to discuss specific **concepts and readings**, and whether their input is thoughtful, provocative, and lively. Do students inject relevant breaking news stories and other timely materials? Do they use the readings to help explain their views? Are they advancing the discussion? Are they utilizing their "poll watching" to help us understand what is really going on?

"Poll Watching"

Students will be asked to write two "poll-watching" papers. These are brief (two-page maximum) analyses of any major public opinion poll. Each poll-watching assignment will be worth five points towards the class work component of the grade (a maximum of 10 pts from poll-watching).

Polls to consider include but are not limited to: ABC News, CBS News, Eagleton Institute (Rutgers), Fox, Gallup, Harris, Kaiser, *LA Times*, Marist, Mason-Dixon, Monmouth University, Morning Consult, National Election Study (NES), NBC/*WSJ*, Pew Research Group, Pollster.com, Quinnipiac, Rasmussen, Roper, *WPost*, Zogby. Check PollingReport.com and realclearpolitics.com for the latest polling data.

Other Components of the Class Work Grade

Instructor evaluation of the students' contribution to the class (5 pts) will be included in the 21 pts allocated to class work. This evaluation will be based on student participation, familiarity with readings and ongoing developments, engagement with guest speakers, and overall performance beyond the quizzes and poll-watching assignments.

3. Study Team Activity (4 points)

There is a *heavy reading load* in this class. Study teams of three or at most four people allow students to keep pace. Therefore, students are required to participate in study teams. It is expected that teams will divide the work and coordinate assignments on their own, but I will be available to assist as needed.

Students will receive a “Reading Synopsis” form for sharing of summaries and commentary. In addition, teams can share and review written assignments before they are submitted. Serving as an editor and proofreader helps improve one’s thinking, and writing skills.

Each team member is expected to do a full share of the work, and teammates will evaluate one another at the end of the semester, a combined ‘grading’ process that can provide up to four points toward the course grade.

4. Initial Paper (20 pts) & Strategic Paper (45 pts): How Real Organizations Influence Public Opinion

Each student will study a specific business organization (a company, professional group, or trade association), or a not-for-profit organization (such as a charity, labor union, university or NGO) or a political entity (such as a legislative committee or government agency at the federal, state or local level). Candidates, elected officials, campaign organizations, PACs and Super Pacs are not allowed.

1. Initial Paper: Examine the public opinion environment for the chosen organization: What are the main drivers? Who are the main players? Why is your organization trying to shape public opinion and how does the effort relate to the mission or goals of the organization? (5-6 pps.) The paper will be assigned during Class 2 and is due at Class 7.
2. Strategic Paper: Building on the analysis performed for the initial paper, for the larger paper (10-12 pps.), students will analyze how effectively their subject organization utilizes and manages public opinion to achieve organizational goals. How does the organization engage in the public opinion process and with what effect? How can or should the organization refocus communications efforts? Students’ research will be based on publicly available information including websites, news articles, social media, testimony and speeches, **and at least one interview with a “player” from your organization, its adversaries, or a journalist covering the organization**. The analysis must draw on, support, or if necessary, refute course readings. The full assignment will be provided during **Class 7**. Outlines and interview questionnaires are due at **Class 10** and papers are due at the **last class**.

All papers and other written work will be submitted and graded via Black Board. Papers will be due by 7:10 PM (the start of class) on the designated days, unless otherwise stated. Unexcused late papers will be subject to a one (1) pt. penalty for the first day, and an additional two (2) pts for the second day for a maximum three-point penalty. Unexcused late papers will not be accepted if they are more than 48 hours (2 days) late.

No duplication of organizations to be studied will be allowed. Students may not choose organizations where they worked or are currently employed or engaged. Specific subjects will be accepted during

the first two classes or by email after the first class, with “ties” resolved on a “first come first served” basis.

Required Readings

- Graber, Doris. *Media Power in Politics 6th Edition* (2011). ISBN 978-1-60426-610-8
- Norrander, B. and Wilcox, C. *Understanding Public Opinion 3rd Edition* (2010). ISBN 978-0-87289-981-0
- Sosnick, Douglas, et al., *Applebee’s America* (2006). ISBN 13:978-0-7432-8718-0 (Paperback)

Partial List of Additional Readings (readings to be provided by Dr. Z)

- Achenbach, Joel, et. al., “How NRA’s true believers converted a marksmanship group into a mighty gun lobby,” *WPost*, 12 Jan 13
- Allen, Danielle, “America’s Seismic Divide on Race Continues,” *WPost*, Jan 8, 2016
- Barrone, Michael, “Why Political Polls Are So Often Wrong,” *WSJ*, Nov. 11, 2015
- Berry J & Sberaj, S, *The Outrage Industry* (2014)
- Bishop, George, *The Illusion of Public Opinion* (2005)
- Center for Media Research, “A Fourth of Americans Age 6-34 Are Hispanic”
- Cillizza, Chris, “Is the American Dream Dead?”, *WPost*, 2015
- CIRCLE, “Youth Turnout 2014” and other material TBD
- Dalton, Russell, J., *Citizen Politics 6th Edition* (2014)
- Day, Elizabeth, “#Black Lives Matter: The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement,” *Guardian*, July 19, 2015
- *Edelman Trust Barometer*, 2016 (when available)
- Erikson, Robert, and Tedin, Kent. *American Public Opinion, 8th Edition* (2011)
- Ferguson, Sherry Devereaux, *Communication Planning* (1999)
- Gans, Herbert, “ Public Opinion Polls Do Not Always Report Public Opinion,” *Neiman*, 29 Apr 13
- Goidel, R. K., *Political Polling in the Digital Age* (2011), ISBN 978-0-8071-3783-3
- Glueck, Katie, “Left, right: The brain science of politics,” *Politico*, 9 Mar 13
- Fletcher, M. “Minorities and Whites Follow Unequal College Paths” and “Increasing College Inequality,” *WPost*, 31 July 13
- Hamburger, Tom, Cruz campaign credits psychological data and analytics for its rising success,” *WSJ*, Dec. 13, 2015
- Herbst, Susan, *Numbered Voices* (1995)
- Key, V.O., *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (1961)
- Lippmann, Walter, *Phantom Public* (1927)
- Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion* (1922)
- Madison, James, “Federalist Paper #10” (1787)
- NPR, “The Ballooning Importance of the Latino Vote,” June 1, 2015
- Pew Research, “Civic Engagement in the Digital Age” (2013)
- Pew Research, “Beyond Distrust, How Americans View Their Government,” Nov. 23, 2015
- Pew Research, State of the Media 2015 (or ’16, if available)
- Pincus, Walter, *WPost*, “A Farewell to the Washington Post,” Dec. 30, 2015
- Sharry, Frank, “How did we build an immigrant movement? We learned from gay rights advocates,” *WPost*, 22 Mar 13
- Stein, Joel, “The Me, Me, Me Generation,” *Time*, 13 May 13

- Stray, Jonathan, “Objectivity and the decades-long drift from “just the facts” to “what does it mean?” Neimman, May 22, 2013
- Zak, Paul, “The Trust Molecule” *WSJ*, Apr. 27, 2012
- Zaller, John, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992)
- Zimmer, Ben “Authenticity in the 2016 Campaign,” *WSJ*, Sept. 18, 2015

Guest Speakers

The exact speaker list and schedule is still being determined, but so far we have commitments from: Meghan McCarthy, Editor in Chief, Morning Consult; Alyssa Rosenberg, Popular Culture blogger for *The Washington Post*; Diana Sun, Director of Communications for Arlington County; and Julian Teixeira, Senior Director of Communications, The National Council of La Raza. I am awaiting confirmation from several other speakers.

Note: the scheduling of particular readings may be altered to accommodate the speakers’ schedules. Any such changes will be announced as far in advance of the new dates as possible.



From The Office of Emergency Management, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, Academic Year 2015-2016. This document and other resources are available on GW Campus Advisories.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION – SYLLABUS INSERT

Instructor: Ben Zingman
Course: PSPR 6223
Building/Room#: Alexandria Center Rm. 212

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Foggy Bottom (GWPD) 202-994-6111

Mount Vernon (GWPD) 202-242-6111

VSTC (Loudoun County) 911

Other Locations 911

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Foggy Bottom (GWPD) 202-994-6110

Mount Vernon (GWPD) 202-242-6110

GW Information Line 202-994-5050

VSTC Information Line 571-553-8333

Fire

- Pull the fire alarm
- Leave the building immediately using the closest emergency exit, closing doors behind you
- Call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 when safe to do so
- Assemble in a designated area (see below)
- Re-enter the building only when instructed by emergency officials
 - Do not assume an alarm is false
 - USE STAIRS, do not use elevators
 - If unable to exit the building, go to the nearest exit stairwell or safe area of refuge and call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 to report your location
 - If trained, use a fire extinguisher if the fire is small and contained and the room is not fill with smoke

Two emergency exits are located: **1) At the front entrance of the building. 2) Off the left fork of the corridor that leads to the restrooms.**

Primary meeting area (near): **Outside, across from Potbelly Sandwiches on Jamieson Str.**
Secondary meeting area (far): **Outside, next to Jimmy Johns on the opposite corner of John Carlyle and Jamieson Str.**

Severe Weather

Thunderstorms are the most common type of severe weather in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. However, winter storms, extreme hot/cold temperatures, flooding, tornadoes and hurricanes can occur. Check **CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu** for up-to-date weather advisories and information.

Shelter-in-place for severe weather events:

- Seek shelter indoors in a low part of the building
- Move to a windowless interior room away from hazardous materials
- Take cover under a sturdy object or against an interior wall
- Monitor **Campus Advisories** and local media
- Wait for the all clear before leaving your safe space

Violence/Active Shooter

If an active shooter is in your vicinity, call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 when it is safe to do so and provide information, including the location and number of shooter(s), description of shooter(s), weapons used and number of potential victims.

Evacuate: *If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises*

- *Have an escape route and plan in mind; leave your belongings behind; follow instructions of police officers*

Hide Out: *If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you*

- *Hide in an area out of the shooter's view; provide protection; lock the doors; block entry to your hiding place; silence your phone; wait for law enforcement*

Take Action: *As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter by:*

- *Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her; yelling; throwing items and improvising weapons; and commit to your actions*

Emergency Communications

CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu *is the university's primary website used for communicating emergency preparedness and incident-related information (including class cancellations) to the GW community.*

GW Alert *is a notification system that sends emergency alerts to email addresses and mobile devices. Students, faculty and staff are requested to maintain current contact information and campus location information by logging into the GWeb Information System (banweb.gwu.edu). In emergency situations, alerts may also appear at the top of university webpages.*

Media Outlets, *such as 103.5 FM WTOP, may be contacted with emergency information, such as weather-related delays and closing.*

ASSIGNMENTS

Section 1 – Public Opinion: What is it and why do we care about it? Class 1-6
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Class 1 – Jan. 14

General Intro – Politics, Public Opinion & Political Socialization & Public Relations - Course Overview

Student Intros (“Elevator Speeches”)

Study Teams Created, Discussed

Synopsis Forms Distributed & Discussed

Initial Choice of Topics/Organizations to Study

Ungraded paper assigned

State of the Union Analysis Assigned

- V.O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, pp. 1-18
- Watch *and* read the State of the Union Speech and the GOP Response from Gov. Nikki Haley

Class 2 – Jan 21

Ungraded Paper Due

Initial Paper Assigned

Public Opinion – A Conundrum of Controversy

- Madison, “Federalist Paper #10”
- Norrander and Wilcox, Introduction, “The Diverse Paths to Understanding Public Opinion” (pp. xi-xxxvii);
- *Norrander & Wilcox, Appendix, “A Primer on Statistics & Public Opinion” (pages 257-68) (Note: if you’ve taken a statistics course, this reading is optional.)*
- Zaller, Chap. 2 (pp. 6-39)
- Bishop, Chap 1 (pp. 1-17)
- Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, Chap. 1 – “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads” (pp. 3-20)
- Eriksen & Tedin, Chap 1 – Section 6 (4 pps)

Class 3 – Jan 28

Guest Speaker – Meghan McCarthy, Editor in Chief, Morning Consult

How Do We Know Public Opinion When We See It?

- Bishop, *Illusion of Public Opinion*, Chap. 2 (pp. 19-45)
- **Sosnick, et al, *Applebee’s America*, Intro. and Chap. 1 (pp. ix-61)**
- Herbst, *Numbered Voices*, “Techniques of Opinion Expression and Measurement,” (pp. 43-68)
- Hamburger, Tom, Cruz campaign credits psychological data and analytics for its rising success,” *WSJ*, Dec. 13, 2015
- Gans, Herbert, “Public Opinion Polls Do Not Always Report Public Opinion,” *Neiman*, 29 Apr 13 (5 pps)
- Barone, ““Why political polls are so often wrong,” *WSJ*, Nov. 12, 2015

Class 4 – Feb 4

State of the Union Analysis Due

Core Values

- Sosnick, Chaps. 2-4, pp. 62-146
- Dalton, Chap 5, “Values in Change” pps. 87-104
- Cillizza, “Is the American dream dead?”
- Zimmer, “Authenticity in the 2016 Campaign”

Class 5 – Feb 11

First Poll Watching Report Due

Values, Genes and Molecules

- Alford & Hibbing, Chap 3, in Norrander and Wilcox “The Ultimate Source of Political Opinions: Genes and the Environment,” (pps. 43-56)
- Edelman, *Trust Barometer*, 2016
- Zak, “The Trust Molecule” (4 pps)
- Glueck, “Left, right: the brain science of politics” (4 pps)
- Jacoby, Chap 8 in Norrander & Wilcox, “Is A Liberal-Conservative Identification an Ideology?” (pp. 143-166)
- Multimedia:
 - Intro to Superman TV Show (1957): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2l4bz1FT8U>
 - Intro to The Jeffersons TV Show (1975):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHDwRECFL8M>

Class 6 – Feb. 18

Guest Speaker

Dynamics of Public Opinion

- Erikson and Tedin, Chap 7, “Group Differences in Political Opinions,” (pp 184-218)
- Sapiro & Shames in Norrander & Wilcox, Chap. 1 “The Gender Basis of Public Opinion” (pp. 1-24)
- Garcia in Norrander and Wilcox, Chap. 2 “Latino Public Opinion” (pp. 25-42)
- *Pew Research, “When Labels Don’t Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity” (1 p)*
- *Pew, “Five takeaways about the 2014 Latino vote”*
- Atkeson and Maestas, Chap 6 in Norrander and Wilcox, “Race and the Formation of Attitudes,” (pps.105-122)
- Allen, “America’s seismic divide on race continues,” *WPost*, Jan. 8 2016
- Wilcox and Carr, The Puzzling Case of Abortion Attitudes of the Millennial Generation,” Chap 7 in Norrander and Wilcox (pp. 123-42)
- *Leonhardt, “Why Abortion is Not Like Other Issues,” NYT, 13 July 13*

Class 7 – Feb. 25

Initial Paper Due

Strategic Paper (Final Paper) Assigned

Some Recent History

- Norrander & Wilcox, Chap. 9, Carsey & Layman, “ Party Identification...,” (pp. 167-92);
- Chap 10, Gronke, et.al., “Trust but Verify...” (pps. 197-214);
- Chap 11, Harper & Norrander, “Rise and Fall of George W. Bush...” (pps. 215-238)
- Norrander & Wilcox, Chap. 4, Berinsky, “Public Opinion and the Iraq War,” (pps. 59-82),
- Chap. 5, Davis, “Public Opinion, Civil Liberties and Security...” (pps. 83-104)
- Chap. 12, Wald, et. al., “In the Court of Public Opinion...” (pps. 239-256)
- In Graber – McAdams, “Strategies of the American Civil Rights Movement, pps. 275-82.
- Day, “#Black Live Matters: The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement”
- Sharry, “How did we build an immigrant movement? We learned from gay rights activists.”
- Achenbach, “How NRA’s true believers converted marksmanship group into a mighty gun lobby”

Section 2 – Political Socialization and Political Engagement: Class 8-9

Class 8 – Mar 3

Guest Speaker

Initial Papers Returned (If all goes well)

Socialization and Engagement – Why Should We Care?

- Gimpel, et.al., *Cultivating Democracy*, Chap. 2; pp. 44-64
- Eriksen & Tedin, Chap 5 (pp.123-154)
- Lippmann, *Phantom Public*, Chap. 1, “The Disenchanted Man” (pp. 3-11) (bz)
- Fletcher, “Minorities and Whites Follow Different College Paths” and “Increasing College Inequalities,” *WPost*, 31 July 13.
- Korn, “Big Gap in Graduation Rates,” *WSJ*, Feb 3, 2015
- King, “In DC schools the racial gap is a chasm, not a crack”
- Dalton, Chap. 4, “Who Participates?” pps.63-83
- Multimedia: “You’ve Got to Be Taught,” from *South Pacific*

Class 9 – Mar 10

Socialization Continued

- Sosnick, Chaps. 5-8 (pp. 147-228)
- Goidel, Chap 6 – “Too Much Talk, Not Enough Action” (pp.99-114)
- Pew and CIRCLE material TBD
- Stein, Joel, “The Me, Me, Me Generation,” *Time*, 13 May 13
- In Graber, Kennedy et. al., “The Soap Opera Path to Health Policy Goals,” pps. 343-354

March 17 – Spring Break

Section 3 – Role of Media in Public Opinion and Public Policy: Class 10-14

Class 10 – Mar 24

Guest Speaker

Research Paper Outline and Questionnaire Due

How Do We Do What We Do When We Do It?

- Ferguson, *Communication Planning*, Chap. 7 “Understanding the Psychology of Audiences,” Chap 8 “Bases of Source Credibility,” Chap. 9 “Message Design, Perception, Cognition and Information Acquisition” and Chap. 10 “Message Design Theories of Persuasion,” Chap. 11 “Choosing the Channel” (pp. 115-88) (bz)
- Miyamoto, “How to Write A Comprehensive Public Relations Plan.” (10 pps)
- Case Study TBD

Class 11 – Mar 31

Second Poll Watching Report Due

Understanding Media Influence

- Graber, Media Power in Politics, Part I “Putting Mass Media Effects into Perspective” (pps. 5-79) (Everyone should read Schudson, “Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press” pps. 33-45 and Jones, “Losing the News,” pp. 57-67.)
- In Graber, Bennet & Serrin, “The Watchdog Role of The Media,” pps. 395-407
- Goidel: Chap 4 : Dunaway, “Poll Centered News Coverage” (pp. 71-84) & Chap. 5 Herbst, “(Un)Numbered Voices,” (pp. 85-98)
- Berry & Sberaj, *Outrage Industry*, Chap. 1 (pps. 3-25)
- Pincus, “A Farewell to the Washington Post”

Class 12 – Apr 7

Guest Speaker

Media Agendas

- Graber, Part II – “Shaping the Political Agenda and Public Opinion” (pps 81-164) (Everyone should read Page, et. al., “What Moves Public Opinion” pps. 85-101, and Baum, “How Soft News Brings Policy Issues to Inattentive Publics,” pps. 113 – 128.)
- Graber, Farnsworth & Lichter, “The Struggle Over Shaping News,” (pps. 165-235)
- Pew State of the Media Overview

Class 13 – Apr 14

Politics and Media – Elections R Us

- Graber, Part III “Influencing Election Outcomes” (165-236). Everyone should read Grabe & Bucy, “News and the Visual Framing of Elections,” pps. 169-85 and Gibson, “New Media and the Revitalization of Politics,” pps. 203-215
- Graber, Part IV “Controlling Media Power- Political Actors vs. the Press” (pps 237-301). Everyone should read Farnsworth & Lichter, “The Struggle over Shaping the News,” pps. 241-50 and Davis, “A Symbiotic Relationship: Bloggers & Journalists,” pps. 293-302)

Class 14 – Apr 21

The Future of Communications and Media

Final Papers Due

- Graber, Part V “Guiding Public Policies” (pps. 303-363) Everyone should read Aday, “The Real War Will Never Get on Television,” pps. 327-336.
- Graber, Part VI “Regulating and Manipulating Media Effects” (Chaps 32, 34 & 35) - 36 pps Everyone should read Chap. 34, Graber, “Terrorism, Censorship and the First Amendment,” pps. 407-21 and Manheim, “The News Shapers,” pps. 421-430.

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