

George Washington University  
Graduate School of Political Management  
Course Overview - Summer 2008

PMGT 265.14 (CRN 12101)  
Expanding the Electorate  
Mondays 6:10 – 8:45pm  
Room: PHIL 414B

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Office Hours: By Appointment

***Course Objectives:***

The overall objective of the course is to provide students with an understanding of how a quantifiable and metrics based approach to electioneering can be used to both change and expand the electorate, changing the playing field for any election. The course will use a review of recent field experiments and campaigns as well as a campaign practicum to develop a fuller understanding of how campaign tactics can be evaluated and perfected for maximum impact.

***Course Description:***

The course will first cover a review of basic campaign models and metrics frequently used to determine the outline of candidate campaigns. From that starting point we will look at the developing field of randomized field experiments being used for evaluation of campaign tactics and how this has been successfully applied to several national campaigns and voter mobilization efforts. This will largely build off of the work conducted by Yale University professors Don Green and Alan Gerber.

The course will then cover specific skill sets needed to effectively understand and undertake this same model of tactical evaluation. Specifically this will cover basic demographic targeting and test methodology.

Finally, the course will engage students in an active campaign experiment to evaluate a campaign tactic chosen, designed and conducted by class participants. This aspect of the campaign will be hands on approach and if possible will result in a published work than can be distributed publicly. The hands on nature of this component of the class as well as the demands of working with an existing campaign will mean that students will be both subject to a significant amount of work and circumstances outside of the classroom environment.

(Note: to accommodate circumstances outside of the class schedule some work after the completion of the course may be required to finalize the practicum. However, students will be able to earn their entire grade from the course work over the ten week schedule and will not be required to do any work following the completion of the course).

### ***Grading requirements:***

The grade for this course will be based on two elements. Half of the entire grade for the class will come from graded homework assignments over the 10 weeks of the class. These will include written papers assessing presented works, small group projects and small group activity that will be reported back to the lecturer.

Forty percent of the grade will come through a final paper in which students will draft a presentation of a complete campaign experiment, complete with historical reference, current context and detailed methodology.

The remaining 10% of the grade will be earned through a final exam.

There may be opportunities to earn extra credit.

### ***Readings:***

In addition to various articles and academic journals, *Get Out The Vote*, by Donald Green and Alan Gerber will be required for completion of the course. The reading load for this course is relatively light, but will be offset by out of class practicum activity.

### ***Class Schedule:***

This class will explore grassroots strategies for mobilizing new groups of voters to win election campaigns. The class will cover theory, strategy, targeting, tactics and will include practicum work.

Week 1. Overview of the course and subject. Understanding two schools of getting to 51%; the old matrix for campaign targeting and the new math for building a winning majority. Overview of field experiment methodology and dominant field tactics and the available research on their impact.

*Graded Homework: Develop options for a randomized field experiment to be conducted by small groups.*

Week 2. No Class. Due to Memorial Day. Class work in small groups on options for randomized field experiments. (NB: Groups wanting to execute early experiments will likely need to meet with the lecturer prior to Week 3).

Week3. Presentation of proposed field experiments plan.

Week 4. Case Study 1. Example of a grassroots approach to mobilizing new voters.

*Graded Homework: Evaluation paper.*

Week 5. Targeting. Who are the new voters, what is targeting, how much of it do you need and what is easily available. How to use publicly available data and how more powerful tools for micro-targeting work.

*Graded Homework: Targeting exercise that has students using online tools to develop demographic targeting information for a fictitious campaign.*

Week 6. Case Study 2. Women's Voices Women Vote.

*Graded Homework: Evaluation paper.*

Week 7. Cost considerations for evaluating tactics. How do real world budgets tip the balance on tactics.

Week 8. New demographics and new targets.

Week 9. Presentation of practicum projects.

Week 10. Final Exam.