

PMGT 235.10: SYLLABUS – FALL 2008

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT – POLITICAL ISSUES

Course Objective: Issues drive the political public policy debate. To some, an issue represents a threat, to others, an opportunity. Understanding the difference depends on one's ability "to read between the lines" and to spot new associated facts – by applying one's knowledge – that suggest change is possible.

The objective of this course is to teach students how to think strategically and how to develop successful plans for change by acquiring a new way to apply the concepts of "*intelligence*" and "*knowledge*". Strategists differ from analysts in their ability to forecast outcomes by looking forward vs. looking backward.

The word "intelligence" comes from two Latin words – "*intel*" and "*legere*." Together they literally mean "to read between the lines". The word "knowledge" comes from the Greek "*gno*," meaning to know by association, and the Latin "*legere*." Students will be challenged to analyze not only what is and why, but also to "read between the lines." The goal: to see how associative facts suggest that seemingly monolithic structures or groups supporting the status quo are ripe for dismemberment or potentially open to changing their views on an issue of concern to the organization.

Format

Weekly lectures by instructor supplemented by student led discussions based on selected books and an occasional guest lecturer.

Course Summary

This course educates issues strategists/managers by providing students with:

- An understanding of the need to place issues in their **historical context**, seeing them as they first emerge and appreciating their potential impact.
- An appreciation that each organization needs a **VISION** against which to measure an emerging **TREND**; to measure that trend against the organization's vision; to then see how **multiple players (individuals and other organizations)** become a force as the issue evolves and gains saliency; and, then, how issues are **resolved** momentarily. Issues are never truly solved in our society.

- A prescribed manner to assess an issues and the tools to evaluate, catalogue, prioritize, and recommend a course of action to help shape its resolution.
- The rationale as to why it is essential today to appreciate that – when dealing with any issue – one must learn to “think globally, but act locally” – and appreciate that in order to **FORECAST** an issue, one may need to look beyond any one election cycle as one measures the entire political process.

The assigned readings and classroom challenges are designed to teach the future strategist how to “read between the lines” (intel-legere) and to “know” by sorting through associated facts to spot emerging trends and issues.

It is also important that students begin to appreciate how issues are impacted from many walks of life and are reported on in depth by the *New York Times*. Thus, students will be expected to have read the NYT every Sunday, and be able to discuss items that link together from various sections.

Instructor: Edward A. Grefe is the author of two books and several articles on the subject of issues management and grassroots advocacy. He headed his own consulting firm (1979-1997), and is now Senior Political Analysts for Aristotle International, a firm established in 1982 to build grassroots organizations, manage PACs, and manage political campaigns. He assists organizations both in the U.S. and in several foreign countries to identify issues and potential allies for coalition politics. He lectures annually at Leiden University in The Hague.

Availability: Office hours by appointment Tues-Wed-Thurs. Call (202) 994.8934 (O), (703) 346.2048; email: grefe@gwu.edu, or a note in my GSPM box.

Grading: A final grade will be based on the student’s individual issue project (25%); class presentation/discussion (25%); the final exam (15%); two papers (10% each); and class participation (15%). **Grade for lecture/discussion presentation includes meeting the deadline for submission – Wed BEFORE Mon.**

Textbook: **Grefe, Edward A.** *The New Corporate Activism: Harnessing the Power of Grassroots Tactics for Your Organization* [NCA].

Readings: **Ehrenreich, Barbara,** *Nickel & Dimed*, (Henry Holt & Co., NY, 2001)
Gardner, Lloyd, *Iraq & Lessons of Vietnam*, New Press, NY, 2007
Halberstam, David, *The Fifties*, (Fawcett Columbine NY, ‘93 [50s])
Halper & Clarke, *America Alone*, (Cambridge Univ., 2004)
Hitchens, Christopher, *God is Not Great*, Twelve Books, NY
Manchester, William, *The Glory and the Dream* (Little Brown, Boston, 1973) - (See selected readings)

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Deutch, London, 1985 or NY publisher)
Schlosser, Eric, *Fast Food Nation* Penguin Books, 2002)
Shipler, David K., *The Working Poor*, (Alfred A. Knopf, NY)
Wallis, Jim, *God's Politics*, (Harper, San Francisco, 2005)
Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present* (HarperCollins, NY, 1995)
Sunday New York Times – Sections: First, Week in Review, Magazine, Book Review (non-fiction).

NOTES: (1) If you are to present to the class and lead the discussion of a reading on a day another assignment is due, you may turn in your assignment the following week.

(2) Everyone is expected to have read the presenter's notes and be ready to discuss and/or to challenge presentation.

(3) The 2 papers should be roughly 3 pages in length; the final exam is up to each student to decide the length.

(4) All books are in library – Manchester's book is on reserve

LECTURES/STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

1. Sep. 8th Understanding the origins of the process of strategic issues management.

Course overview – Linking of Issues management to overall public affairs function. Concepts of governance; concepts of appreciation of change and the ability of US generations to deal with both; appreciation of historical context.

2. Sep. 15th Understanding the origins of the process of strategic issues management.

Identifying the organization's Vision, how public affairs function support's organization to achieve Vision by monitoring emerging Trends; evaluating potential Issues caused by the Trend. Life cycle of an issue. Measuring economic impact as T/O. Evaluating issue in terms of SWOT; choosing an issue to profile.

NCA: Preface, Chap 1, Chap 2

Discussion of Individual Projects – Distribution of Outlines

3. Sep 22nd Understanding the origins of the process of strategic issues management.

Goals of issues management – Why single issues predominate.

Distinguishing types of issues.

NCA Chapters 4, 5, 8

4. Sep 29th Understanding the context within which issues have played out in the U.S. .
Origins of issues we face – Zinn: People's History of US – Chaps 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16
PROJECT TOPICS DUE
5. Oct. 6th Understanding the context within which issues have played out in the U.S. .
Way we in U.S. address issues – Schlesinger: Cycles of American History – Forward, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.
PAPER DUE: Manchester's Book
6. Oct. 13th Understanding the context within which issues of the late 20th and early 21st century were shaped by the events of the 1950s
Halberstam: The Fifties – Chapters 1 – 23
7. Oct. 20th Understanding the context within which issues of the late 20th and early 21st century were shaped by the events of the 1950s
Halberstam: The Fifties – Chapters 24 – 46
8. Oct. 27th Focusing on some fundamental strategic issues today
Centrality of Religion to Strategic Issues Management: Wallis: God's Politics – Intro, Chap 1, 2, 3; Hitchens: God is not Great – Chaps 2, 4,
9. Nov. 3rd Focusing on some fundamental strategic issues today
Centrality of Religion to Strategic Issues Management: God is not Great – Chaps 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19
PAPER DUE: View “The Graduate” and “American Beauty” – See notes at end of syllabus.
10. Nov. 10th Focusing on some fundamental strategic issues today
Dealing with those whose roots link to those discussed in a People's History of the U.S. – Ehrenreich: Nickel & Dimed (Intro, Evaluation + pick/report on 1 of 3 states; Shipler: The Working Poor (Preface ix-xi, Intro, & Chap 1); Schlosser: Fast Food Nation (Page 71 to “Stroking” Page 88)

11. Nov. 17th Focusing on some fundamental strategic issues today
GUEST: “PAT” PATTERSON, Retired State Dept. Diplomat,
 Mid-East expert, Co-Chair Iraq Planning Group

Dealing with the current cycle of American history – Gardner: *Iraq & the Lessons of Vietnam* – Intro, Chaps 1, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13; Harper & Clarke: *America Alone* – Intro, Chap 1

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PAPERS DUE NEXT WEEK

12. Nov 24th Project presentations (Group A) – discussion/critique by Group B
 13. Dec. 1st Project presentations (Group B) – discussion/critique by Group A

Take Home Final Exam .

14. Dec. 8th **FINAL EXAM DUE NO LATER THAN 6:00 PM** – by email OR by paper in my mail box at GSPM .

Dec. 15th GRADES RETURNED .

PAPER: Manchester’s Book

Manchester, William, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*, Gilman Reserve, or in stacks E806.M34

My Copy on Reserve – 63477 Gilman Stacks – 2 Volumes E806M341, v. 1

Pages	1 – 23	1 – 26 “In the desperate...incredible speed”
	108 – 117	129 – 140 “The building of Father...Huey Long”
	130 – 135	156 – 163 “In many ways... <i>makes us strong!</i> ”
	153 – 163	185 – 198 “On February 4...days, lay ahead”
	297 – 302	362 – 369 “They did not...Japan-Amer Society”
	418 – 432	511 – 529 Whole chapter
	477 – 482	584 – 590 “In a Peter...Bloomingdale’s computers”
	492 – 513	602 – 638 “The liberal ..did they have any ideas?”
	523 – 530	640 – 649 “Late in the...two & one-half months ago”
	680 – 687	831 – 841 “Washington and...in disguise.”
		VOLUME 2:
	731 – 743	895 – 910 “The average American...that’s right”
	799 – 810	978 – 991 “faubus (fau-bus)...Angela Davis, twelve”
	848 – 850	1037 – 1040 “The hope that black...facts of life”

Review and analyze the impact each of the issues has had on the U.S. and link to Zinn.

PAPER: Two Movies

Writers and playwrights hold a mirror up to us. With these two movies discuss initially the parallel story lines that link the two. Then note especially the American ethic trumpeted in our best American literature, movie, and plays that is so amply displayed by the tragic flaw in each of the characters. Finally, show how this ethic underscores and reinforces the political messages we succumb to whether dealing with candidates or causes.

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION-PRESENTATIONS

The objective is to demonstrate your ability to critically analyze the reading and present your analysis in a written format similar to what one might find in a review essay in a leading journal in the field of strategic issues management. Thus I do not want a simple summary of the content of the readings as in “here is what the author said in chapter x.” Members of the class can determine that on their own.

Instead the presenter is to “provide comments” on the material assigned. This requires critical thought and reflection. Some questions one might answer in a review essay include:

1. Who is the author, what is his/her significance, and why might this person’s work be significant to a class on managing strategic issues?
2. What are the main messages or arguments?
3. Do you agree or disagree with these arguments? Why?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the main arguments?
5. What are the empirical evidence and logical reasoning to support the argument? (Here you are expected to cite the Sunday New York Times or other relevant print media. Please provide the class with copied of material cited other than the NYT.)
6. Does the argument appear biased, to be missing important elements etc.? If “yes,” cite sources that counter this view.
7. What contribution does each reading make to our knowledge of the political process and how we can “*intelegerere*” (“read between the lines”) or “*gno-legerere*” (“know by association with”) issues that are emerging or currently front and center?
8. Are there consistencies or contradictions between what you have read and other sources? That is – is there a credible opposite opinion you can cite for the class using other sources.
9. How is our “knowledge” improved from understanding the author’s thesis – what other facts does it enhance or alter; or retard, if you think that is the case?

The person assigned to read and present must email me a copy of the written summary that will be shared with the class on the **Wednesday** that precedes the presentation date. A PowerPoint presentation of **ONLY** the salient points should help guide the discussion.

Each presenter has 45 minutes – only 15 of which (maximum) will be for the PowerPoint.