

PMGT 203, Spring 2009
Communications Elements
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Office Hours: By Appointment & After Class Location of Class: 1957 E Street, NW,
Room 212 Mondays 7:10 p.m.-9:40 p.m.

This course introduces GSPM students to the specialized forms of communication which political professionals use to win support for their candidates and causes. Students will learn how to produce strategically sound and rhetorically powerful messages for electoral, advocacy, educational, corporate, and crisis campaigning. Just as important, students will learn how to evaluate the messages of others with a critical eye.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices (Communication, Media, and Politics) - Trent Judith S. 6th Edition

RECOMMENDED TEXTS: Subscription to the on-line version of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA TODAY* and the *Washington Times* (free), *The Politico*, *The Hill*, the "Hotline", the "Note" and/or the *AP Style Manual*.

ATTENDANCE: You are required to attend every class as per University policy. The only excused absences are for a) illness; b) compelling circumstances beyond your control; 3) religious holidays; 4) or University business. Please note that regardless of circumstance, you are responsible for material covered in class whether you are present or not.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: This is a serious issue. I will immediately report to the proper authorities any cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or re-use of old ³previously written/submitted² or purchased papers.

CLASS FORMAT: We will divide class time between lectures and small group applications on most class days. Please remember that I encourage class participation and I will grade you on it.

GRADING POLICY: To pass this course you must earn at least a sixty-percent average across all course assignments. The range of possible grades, their numerical/percentage equivalents, and subjective descriptions are as follows:

A	93-100	Excellent; near perfect submission
A-	90-92	Borderline excellent
B+	87-89	Superior
B	83-86	Above average
B-	80-82	Somewhat above average
C	70-79	Average
D	60-69	Below average
F	0-60	Failing

Please recognize that the quantity of work is not as important as the quality of work. While you may spend a lot of time and effort into readings, what counts at grading time is the quality of the product.

LATE POLICY: In all cases, I will accept late assignments no later than one week after the due date (a grade-per-weekday penalty is in effect). All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

APPEALS: If you wish to appeal a particular late penalty, grade, or other policy, you must appeal in a typewritten letter no later than one week after the implementation of the policy or grade. Your appeal should include rational support for your appeal. I reserve the right to uphold or change the grade as I deem fit. If the appeals process does not satisfy you, you may appeal to the department chair if you wish.

MAKE-UPS: In general you may not make-up tests or presentations unless approved by me.

FILING OF PAPERS: I will keep on file a copy of all of the projects and assignments that you turn in for academic credit; I will keep all materials on file for 3 years at the end of the Semester.

PAPER CHARACTERISTICS: According University policy, you will use either the MLA or AP styles for your research papers. You must type your papers (double-spaced), following page requirements and using standard 12-point font size (Times New Roman) and one-inch margins

- A) To understand the importance of language and rhetoric in shaping one's notion of political reality;
- B) To increase awareness about the relationship between media and politics;
- C) To analyze the way communication functions in political settings;
- D) To explore the role of communication in all three branches of government;
- E) To understand what motivates people to run for elected office, and what motivates people to elect them into office from a message perspective.
- F) To understand the grassroots and grass 3tops2 message perspective.

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Political Situation Memo (6)	Worth 60% of your total grade
Group YouTube Advertisement	Worth 20% of your total grade
Class Participation	Worth 20% of your total grade

Assignment Description

Political Situation Memo(s): You are the Political Director for the George Washington News Network, a major news network that reaches millions of households daily. Your job as the political director is to write 6 short memos that handicap and or critique the messaging of Republicans and Democrats on current political events. This also would include the new President and how the opposing party is pushing back from a messaging standpoint. Your memo should be written by you and should be addressed to the dozens of political reporters, assignment editors and managers who rely on you for their reporting. Your memo is also published daily on the network's website as a "must read" so potentially millions of viewers would read your memo as well. Each memo should be at least 2 pages long lay out the current political messaging environment and offer a thoughtful political analysis as to what party is winning the message war. Polling data, public opinion and other information to support your argument would be useful. The memo topic will be chosen by me the week prior to its due date.

Group YouTube Advertisement: You, along with three of your classmates will work together to create, write, and produce a television or radio advocacy commercial that will promote the cause the three of you believe strongly in. The topic/subject has to be a unanimous decision by the three of you. The commercial should be 30 seconds long, have a logical introduction, middle and conclusion. The commercial can be as complex as the three of you having an actual commercial posted on YouTube or can be as simple as the group acting out or providing a storyboard of your commercial in front of the class. Regardless, the commercial will be seen and critiqued by your fellow classmates in the categories of persuaviness, originality, and creativity.

Class Participation: This class is solely designed with you serving as an active participant in class discussions and projects. You are encouraged to ask probing questions that challenge the intellectual thinking of all the students in the class, which includes this Professor. With this in mind, you will be graded on your class discussions and active participation.

SCHEDULE BREAKDOWN

Please note that every class discussion will consist of current/daily political news. That's why it's imperative to read the daily newspapers. We will then apply the current news to the chapter discussion when appropriate.

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| 1/12/09 | Syllabus Review
Class Orientation
Discussion of Communication Elements
Discussion of Current Media/Political Climate |
| 1/19/09 | What is Your Story? Telling Your Story/Developing A
Message/Branding
Readings Due: Discussion of front page <i>New York Times</i> , <i>Washington Post</i> and <i>Politico</i> political news. |
| 1/26/09 | Finding/Knowing Your Audience
<u>Political Situation Memo Due</u> |
| 2/2/09 | Communication Vehicles. Discussion Of Various Ways To Communicate
Your Message
Readings Due: Trent. Chapter 3. |
| 2/16/09 | PAC Messaging
Readings Due: Trent. Chapter 1.
<u>Political Situation Memo Due</u> |
| 2/23/09 | 527/Issue Advocacy
Readings Due: Trent Chapter 2. |
| 3/2/09 | Candidate Messaging versus Governing Messaging
Readings Due: Chapters 6 & 7
<u>Political Situation Memo Due</u> |
| 3/16/09 | Spring Break. No Class |

- 3/23/09 There's A Crisis. The Art Of Handling Crisis Communications
Possible Guest Speaker
Political Situation Memo Due
- 3/30/09 Obama's First 60 Days. How is the new Administration doing?
Readings Due: Discussion of front page *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Politico* political news.
- 4/6/09 Paid Political Media
Advertisement
Direct Mail
e-Campaigning
Readings Due: Trent. Chapters 5 & 10.
Political Situation Memo Due
- 4/13/09 Handling The Press
Thinking Like A Reporter
Political Situation Memo Due
- 4/20/09 Political Messaging in 2008, 2010, and 2012
Readings Due: Trent. Chapter 11
- 4/27/09 Class Recap/Last Day of Class